

# **PATHFINDER:**

## **ADVENTURES IN RESEARCHER LAND**

**ISSUE 2 NOVEMBER 2021**



**EXPLORING AND CELEBRATING OUR DIVERSE  
RESEARCHER COMMUNITIES**



4

6



Positive and Inclusive Research Culture

**Prosper.** Unlocking postdoc career potential



8

10



12

## Inside this issue

- 4/5 Making an Impact 2021
- 6/7 Development activities
- 8/9 Prosper
- 10/11 Researcher Wellbeing
- 12/13 National Postdoc Conference 2021 (NPDC21)

## FOREWORD



**Dr James Howard**

Director of the Academy

It's a great pleasure to welcome you to the second edition of Pathfinder: Adventures in Researcher Land, a dedicated publication for researchers and research related staff across the University of Liverpool.

The 6 months since our last edition have been incredibly busy, with a huge range of collaborative activities and initiatives successfully delivered and it's been a genuine privilege to work with so many of you throughout this period.

In the pages that follow, we'll reflect on how our researchers have continued to contribute to the development of a sustainable and inclusive research culture. We'll hear from three of our Tenure Track Fellows as they share, first-hand, the high's (and occasionally lows!) of their academic career journey and provide key insights into the TTF process.

We also meet Dr. Eamon Dubaissi, from the Academy's Research England funded Prosper Project, who explains how his role seeks to further support the career development of postdoctoral researchers through work with the project's pilot cohorts. Eamon also shares his top tips for how postdocs can get the most out of their time at Liverpool.

Presenting a useful reminder to all of us, we hear about researcher wellbeing and benefit from the insights and practical advice of Dr. Janette Greenhalgh, Senior Research Fellow in HLS. Of course, effective practice and wellbeing were key concerns in the design and delivery of September's National Postdoc Conference and the final section of this edition sees colleagues from across the UK share their reflections on this hugely successful event.

Finally, a reminder that Pathfinder is for everyone within Liverpool's researcher community – so if you have a story or success you would like to share, please do get in touch!

Until next time,



# Making an Impact 2021

The annual [Making an Impact](#) programme of events led by The Academy was developed to provide researchers and research related staff across all career stages and disciplines access to development activities focused around research impact and knowledge exchange.

Since it began in 2018 the Series has involved over 300 external and internal colleagues providing over 120 sessions that 1600+ individuals have engaged with. The annual Series of development activities has evolved each year to respond to the current climate and need of researchers and consists of diverse sessions which address contemporary topics within the research and impact landscape.

## Podcasts

[Developing International Partnerships](#)  
[Research blogging](#)  
[Engaging with policy makers](#)

## Sessions

66 live sessions  
12 timetabled pre-recorded sessions  
[44 recorded sessions](#)  
50 linked online resources

Taking place over 5 weeks from 10th May -11th June 2021, all sessions were delivered online. The programme was flexible and innovative and built on the [resources and materials](#) generated during previous Making an Impact Series, providing a variety of rich and topical sessions for returning participants and those engaging for the first time.

Learning from the experience of delivering an entirely online event in 2020, consideration was once more given to networking, caring responsibilities, accessibility needs and “Zoom” fatigue.

Over **100** external and internal speakers provided **78** development sessions, **66** of which were delivered live, with over **2018** registrations from **815** individuals, **14** of the live sessions were opened out to external audiences, with attendees from **30** different institutions.

New to the 2021 programme was the “From Liverpool to Impact” series of talks that were delivered by University of Liverpool Alumni. The format of the sessions was varied and included a ‘fireside chat’, panel discussions and webinars. All sessions demonstrated successful career paths outside of academia and highlighted the transferability of the skills and abilities of researchers with an academic background.

Week four of the five-week series consisted of 12 pre-recorded sessions which included virtual tours of Senor City, a panel discussion and Keynote sessions from previous Making an Impact Series. These sessions were timetabled into the programme but could also be accessed at any time and were linked to many of the live sessions delivered throughout the other four weeks of the Series.

## Participants

20% Academic, Teaching & Research  
26% Postdoctoral Researcher  
9% Early Career Researcher  
1% Mid Career Researcher  
15% Postgraduate Researcher  
4% Principal Investigator  
21% Professional services  
1% Clinical Research Staff  
3% Other

Evaluation and feedback were collected from all Making an Impact 2021 sessions

This feedback contributes to the planning and design of future events.

For Making an Impact 2021, key themes from participants’ qualitative feedback suggested that all of the aims set out for the series were met. The success of the aims are supported with a representative selection of participants’ testimonies.

## Long term outcomes.

By measuring long term outcomes, we can evaluate how engaging with development activities as part of Making an Impact has changed or enhanced practice and ultimately resulted in increased ownership and responsibility in driving the participants research impacts needs and ambitions.

Here are some testimonies from participants that had attended one or more of the Series in the past.

# Testimonials

**“Making an impact was a breath of fresh air from the rut of research practice I’d gotten into. It helped me think creatively about my research again, feel energised to engage with new audiences, and to work differently”**

**“Making an Impact was an opportunity for me to reflect on my everyday research practices and to engage with new and creative means of achieving my goals. I’d encourage everyone to take part”**

**“Wonderfully organised sessions, with rich content to help researchers develop and strive to make a real impact in the world”**

**“I feel more confident in carrying out my role at the University as discussions really useful and informative.**

**Don’t get the opportunity often to think about these issues - ..... Some of the more creative tools in terms of approaches to work have been wonderful.”**

## Long Term outcomes

**“Making an Impact gives you an opportunity to look at things you have only heard the name of. Rather than being an “unknown” factor, you come out of these sessions with some good general understanding and names of people to contact should I need to carry out my role”**

**“Absolutely changed my practice, improving my skills and the way I consider and work.”**

**“The Series has provided me and my practice with a robust framework that has crystalised what I learnt organically but couldn’t articulate so clearly. This enables me to evaluate industry partnerships and bridge the cultural gaps better. I have shared my learning with colleagues.”**

**“Opened the mind to alternative careers and helps with the requirements to get there ...**

# Development Activities

“Take your own development seriously – Be proactive, seek out the training you need.”

Recognising that researchers must be equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse global research environment and employment market, access to rich and diverse development opportunities for researchers is required.

The University of Liverpool Research Staff Association supported by the Academy help coordinate central support for researcher development through regular [Lunch and Learn sessions](#).

Topics covered include:

- [How to use Microsoft Teams for Research collaboration and communication](#)
- [Full Economic Costing and general costing of research projects](#)
- [How to make your PDR fit with your personal and professional goals](#)

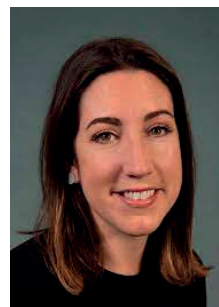
In a session entitled “[The good, the bad and the ugly about getting a Tenure Track Fellowship](#)” Health and Life Science PIs Dr Kate Baker, Dr Jamie Hall, and Dr Siobhan O’Brien shared first-hand the highs and lows in their path to getting their Tenure Track Fellowships (TTF) at the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences at the University of Liverpool.

## Route to TTF

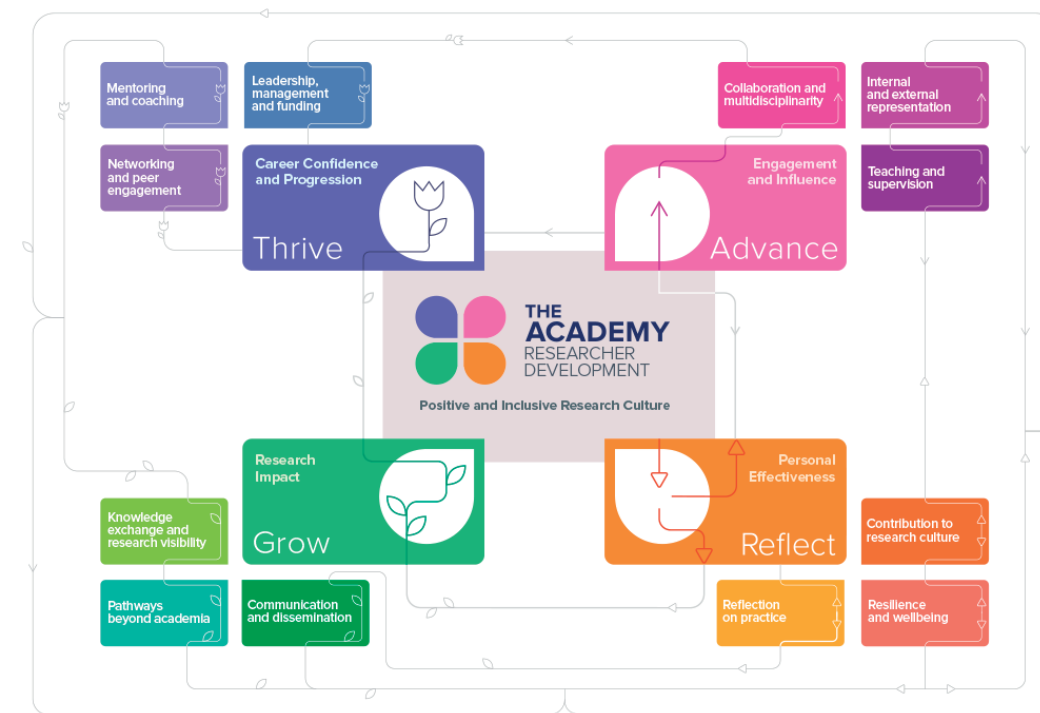


**Dr Jamie Hall** did a PhD in Molecular Parasitology at the University of Glasgow (2008-2013), but when looking for a postdoc realised it was evolution and coevolution that Jamie found most exciting about microbiology. Jamie had postdocs positions looking at the evolutionary ecology of horizontal gene transfer at the Universities of York and Sheffield (2013-2018) and is now a Tenure Track Fellow at the University of Liverpool (2018–present), leading a small group with a postdoc, a PhD student, and two MRes students.

**Dr Siobhan O’Brien** did a BA in Zoology Trinity College Dublin in 2010, followed by a MSc and PhD in Exeter. Siobhan obtained a Centre for Chronic Diseases and Disorders 2 year Fellowship at the University of York (2015-2017) and then a 1 year Fellowship in Zurich. A short 4 month Fellowship in Berlin led to Siobhan applying for and being successful in obtaining a TTF in Liverpool in 2019. In 2020 Siobhan was awarded a BBSRC Discovery Fellowship to build up her group. Siobhan is now an assistant Professor in Microbiology in Trinity College Dublin.



**Dr Kate Baker** originally trained as a veterinarian in Australia and after a couple of years in clinical practice moved to the UK to do a PhD in the University of Cambridge (2009-2013), followed by a postdoc at the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute (2013 - 2016). Kate (2016 – present) now leads a group at the University of Liverpool continuing this work as a Senior Lecturer awarded in 2019. Kate moved her Wellcome Trust Research Fellowship with her to Liverpool which led to her Tenure Track Fellowship at Liverpool.



## How do I know a TTF is for me?

**Siobhan** - As well as a TTF, there are a few different academic positions available to Early Career Researchers. Assistant Professor positions and lectureships are similar to TTF’s, but you are often expected to do a lot of teaching from the beginning so your research time is reduced. If you want to dedicate a lot of time to research this might not be the best route.

The benefits of a TTF can be a low teaching load to start with which increases over time to give you the chance to establish your research first. TTF’s also often start their post as a cohort with other TTF’s so you can ask each other questions and start your independent research career with others to lean on and talk to that are in the same position as you.

It is worth looking to see if there is start-up funding available with the TTF so that you have a bit of money to get started without having to rely on getting a big fellowship straight away.

## What can increase my chances of getting a TTF?

**Jamie** - Talking to people that have been on TTF panels is a good idea, it will let you know what the panel is likely to be looking for and how best to present your research experience.

The main currency is research income and high quality publications. A well rounded C.V. helps but it is your paper output and funding income that make your application really attractive.

Important to ask yourself when offered an opportunity, how does taking this on get me where I want to be? If it doesn’t is it worth doing it? A good network and mentors can help you make these decisions.

People hiring are looking for colleagues to work with too. Do your research, who is there at the place you are applying to that you could work with? What collaborations could you have? Show this on your application. Interpersonal interactions are really important.

For all fellowships run your application by many people, every application should have multiple rounds of internal reviews.

## What happens after you get a TTF?

**Kate** - The requirements for a TTF vary but are mostly a combination or internal and external leadership, teaching and student experience and research impact. Work out what is really important to the institute you are working for.

Don’t say yes to everything, just the opportunities that will help you progress in your career/ fulfil the requirements of your TTF.

A TTF can be really rewarding providing you with lots of independence, however can also be very lonely too when you are first building your group.

You need to become really good at time management so that you can create time to allow yourself to come up with a good fellowship/research project and this will come from lots of ideas and not just one so you will need time to allow this to happen.

Take your own development seriously – Be proactive, seek out the training you need.

The problems you had as a postdoc, don’t just go away with a TTF, just a different set of paths to take. Even once tenured lots of decisions are still needed, the choices don’t get smaller. Do you want to work with this group? Do more teaching? Focus on this area?....

Pay attention to what you enjoy. This will help you decide where to focus your energies.

# Prosper.

Unlocking postdoc career potential



**P**rosper is a new approach to career development that unlocks postdocs' potential to thrive in multiple career pathways by challenging the norms that currently define postdoctoral success.

Our goal is to open up the huge talent pool that exists within the postdoc community, to the benefit of postdocs themselves, Principal Investigators, employers and the wider UK economy.

Built around 3 pillars of co-creation, democratisation of access and recognising the role of PIs in postdoc development, Prosper is funded by the Research England RED fund. A partnership between the Universities of Liverpool and Manchester and Lancaster University, it will be ultimately opened up to universities across the UK in 2023.

This portal and its first set of resources have been drawn together from our early work with postdocs, PIs and employers and reflect the insights we've gathered into what all 3 of these groups have told us they need from a career development approach.

These resources will also be informed by our targeted work with 53 University of Liverpool postdocs as part of our first postdoc career development pilot that began in April 2021.



Dr Eamon Dubaissi  
Prosper Research Staff Developer

## Tell us about yourself and how you joined the team?

Before joining Prosper, I was a researcher in the Biological Sciences. I did my undergraduate degree (University of Bristol) in Biochemistry with an industrial placement year at AstraZeneca before moving on to a PhD in Developmental Biology at the University of Manchester.

After a brief postdoc position in the same lab as I did my PhD, I had the opportunity to join a different lab in Manchester that researched the biochemistry of mucus and changes to mucus in airway disease (e.g. Cystic Fibrosis and Asthma). I used research from my PhD combined with my postdoc to co-write a successful grant application. At the time, I thought this was a good opportunity to lead my own research, learn about the grant writing process and move towards independence.

Towards the end of the first grant, I wrote another two more, which were also funded, so I continued on as a postdoc. However, by this point I had already been a postdoc for seven years and the pathway to independence felt like it was narrowing. I applied for a few internal fellowships and although I was interviewed, I was not successful.

Speaking with my fellow postdoc friends and colleagues, I saw that many were also struggling along the academic pathway feeling uncertain about their prospects and worrying about their job security and what they would be doing next. I wanted to get involved with trying to improve the local environment for researchers, so I became a research staff representative for my department. This was a great opportunity to understand more about how a University works (what goes on behind the scenes) and explore ways to

support postdocs. As I entered my tenth year as a postdoc, I decided that my time on the academic pathway was coming to an end. When I saw the opportunity to join the Prosper team, I thought it was ideal for me given my lived experience of being a postdoc and my role as a research staff representative. But even so, I still had to think long and hard about what I was doing. I love research and all the promise it holds, but I didn't enjoy the way it made me feel. Constantly striving for something you may never reach was quite disheartening.

With lots of experience of grant and paper writing, I also knew that this was not something I wanted to do long term. So, after a bit of soul searching, I applied for the role of Research Staff Developer at Prosper, interviewed and was offered the position. I am very much aligned with the ethos of Prosper – to open up new opportunities for postdocs along a multitude of career paths beyond academia. I want people to go into their postdoc positions knowing that the skills they develop can be employed in many different careers as well as in the traditional academic route. Prosper is a vehicle to make this happen and I am enjoying making my contribution to it.

## Tell us a bit more about your role and how this falls in with the ongoing priorities of Prosper?

As a Research Staff Developer in a relatively small team, I do a lot of different things on a daily basis. This includes working with the Instructional Designer to develop the content of the Prosper portal, working with the Stakeholder Engagement Manager to reach out to employers, working with the Communications Manager to get messages to the right place and working with the other Research Staff Developers to design and run development opportunities for postdocs.

My main role is to work with the cohort of postdocs currently on the Prosper pilot programme to co-create a set of resources that will be useful to all postdocs, whether they are looking to move beyond academia or are just weighing up their options. This includes organising sessions on the tools needed to succeed in job applications (e.g. CV writing and developing LinkedIn profiles), focussing in on the transferable skills that employers are looking for and acting as a bridge between the postdocs and the employers by setting up opportunities for them to interact.

The resources are being developed as the project progresses, a new cohort of postdocs will be starting in 2022 and by 2023 the portal (with all its resources) will be open for all postdocs to use. The aim is that postdocs will be more knowledgeable about what else they can do, how to get there and be more

confident in the skills that they possess. We believe that empowering postdocs in this way will also make them more satisfied and productive in their research, which is of benefit to all.

## How do you feel your experience as a postdoc helps in your new role?

I think my postdoc experience has been essential and gives me (and the team) a perspective that is definitely needed when deciding on how to approach the development of the different resources. It also gives me an authentic voice when talking to postdocs – I have been in their position.

My understanding of the academic system, the role of the PI and the unique pressures that researchers are under is also of paramount importance to the job. I would also say that it is probably the first time that I have truly realised (and reflected on) all of the transferable skills that you develop as a postdoc. The focus tends to be on the outputs - producing a paper or getting a grant - and not really on the skills you are using to achieve those goals. The confidence to present, influence, lead, create and engage with others in a new environment are things that I developed as a postdoc and I am using right now. It is not always so obvious to postdocs that they are using these skills on a daily basis and that these skills are in high demand from employers.

## How can postdocs get the most out of their time at Liverpool? (top tips on how to unlock your potential)

**Get involved!** Outside of your research as well as within your research environment. See if you can be part of the grant (and paper) writing as you will learn more about what is needed to succeed in academia, but also develop skills that can be used beyond academia. See if you can join the [Research Staff Association](#) and help to create a supportive environment alongside your fellow researchers. You'll also find out a lot more about the University. It might be a bit of work, but it will be worth it because of the confidence it will bring to you. It is also a great way to demonstrate your transferable skills, drive, passion and enthusiasm.

Be open to new things and to meet new people – this is networking and it doesn't have to be hard work. It can be done everyday and opens up opportunities you wouldn't have ever known existed. Try to enjoy yourself as much as possible. It's hard to be stressed when you're enjoying yourself! When you're relaxed, you can really be your self and unlock all of the skills that can sometimes be hidden away. Always be mindful of the skills you are using, that way when the time comes to articulate them in job applications and interviews, you will be ready!

“I am very much aligned with the ethos of Prosper – to open up new opportunities for Postdocs along a multitude of career paths beyond academia”

# Researcher Wellbeing



“One way of restoring a sense of self is through wellbeing activities.”

Researchers lead busy, sometimes stressful lives. Since people spend a good deal of their time at work, it is particularly important for them to achieve a work/life balance.

[The Researcher development mission statement](#) highlights our commitment to actively embed a concern for equity, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing across the development activities we lead.

One of the four key areas of the [Researcher Development roadmap](#) is Reflect – Personal Effectiveness, which has 3 subthemes that include numerous resources in a variety of formats on; Contributions to research culture, Reflection on practice and Resilience and wellbeing.



To help fulfil this commitment a number of events and resources have been developed and delivered to enable researchers to recharge and to support a positive research environment.

Every month a virtual coffee meeting is available for all researchers to attend to informally chat with one another, meet members of the core committee and also to welcome new starters. More details are available via the Research Staff Association weekly ebulletin

A number of [researcher blogs](#) written by professional coaches and researchers from the University of Liverpool and beyond provide tips and advice regarding wellbeing.

Titles include:

[Why wellbeing can't wait](#)

[The benefits of achieving a calmer life](#)

[Top tips for Researchers to Energise, Reset and Restore](#)

[Recognising thinking processes that affect our wellbeing](#)

[How to be a resilient researcher](#)

Dedicated [wellbeing webpages](#) within the Researcher hub link to internal and [external resources](#) and act as a living resource that is continually added to support and prioritise researchers' wellbeing through a variety of ways.

The University of Liverpool Research Staff Association, led by the Academy were involved in the organisation of a week of wellbeing events in July 2021.

All the sessions were recorded and are available via the Researcher hub.

Sessions included:

- [Yoga](#)
- [Meditation](#)
- Coaching sessions
  - [Preparing for Re-entry!](#)
  - [Energise, Reset and Restore](#)
  - [Know your Value!](#)

**Dr Janette Greenhalgh**  
Senior Research Fellow  
Faculty of Health and Life Sciences

## Tell us a bit about yourself.

I was awarded a PhD in Psychology by Bangor University many years ago (1999) for my research into increasing fruit and vegetable intake in preschool children. I have been a researcher at Liverpool University since 2006 in the somewhat different field of health technology assessment.

Most of my time is spent on work for the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), critiquing pharmaceutical company's evidence submissions to the NICE Single Technology Appraisal process. Some of my time is given over to authoring Cochrane reviews. I'm also a deputy co-chair of the University of Liverpool Research Staff Association.

## Researchers spend more time than ever online, do you have any advice on how we can recharge whilst sat at our computers?

As wonderful as platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams (other platforms are available...) are, I'm sure I'm not the only researcher who has experienced online communications fatigue. Constantly attending meetings with colleagues or taking part in online conferences can be very draining! One way of restoring a sense of self is through wellbeing activities.

I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to curate the [Wellbeing Oasis](#) for the 2021 online National Post Doc conference and I was amazed at the variety of wellbeing activities available. There are so many ways to switch off and recharge! For the conference, our final selection of activities included short mindfulness and mini meditation sessions (outdoor and indoor activities), singing for fun tutorials, short yoga and exercise activities, online jigsaw puzzles and colouring, as well as a range of mood music and ambient sounds.

My favourite finds were the Office Jazz soundtrack and the Ancient Library Ambience with its crackling fireplace, thunder and rain. In our sometimes frenetic work lives, it is lovely to find your happy!

## Can you share any top tips you have for researchers in creating a positive work life balance?

- Set specific hours for your working day and avoid checking e-mail etc after those hours
- Take regular breaks from your workspace to have a cuppa, take a short walk, fuss your dog, do a mindfulness practice, stretch
- Before you start work, write down three things that make you happy and a positive mantra for the day



**Keynote session by Prof Dame Ottoline Leyser.**

29 bitesized parallel sessions on topics that include;

- Careers outside of Academia
- Research Impact
- Team Science
- Project leadership
- Community building

**Panel discussion on Collaborative Research Practices**

Panellists:

- Professor Dame Janet Beer (Chair)
- Professor Julia Buckingham CBE
- Dr Annette Bramley
- Dr Karen Salt
- Dr Edward Pyzer Knapp
- Dr Joshua Kaggie



**NPDC21**

**NATIONAL  
POSTDOC  
CONFERENCE  
2021**

**New Realities,  
Stronger Connections,  
Successful Futures**

Hosted by the Academy at the University of Liverpool

Approximately 2000 researchers and research related staff from across the UK and beyond engaged with the wholly virtual event on 24th September 2021.

The recordings and linked presentation resources of all the NPDC21 sessions can now be accessed directly from the respective links via the [NPDC21 Programme page](#).

A visual summary of the whole event, including the keynote and panel on collaborative research practices is available [here](#).

The [NPDC21 Virtual Delegate Pack](#) contains many useful resources to spark post-Conference reflections and ongoing career and professional development, and includes the NPDC21 pocketbook of top tips, podcasts, blog posts sponsor materials and research-related resources.



The National Postdoc Conference 2021, in partnership with the N8 Research Partnership, was hosted on behalf of the University of Liverpool by The Academy. The University of Liverpool organising team worked with postdoc representatives from diverse research and non-research intensive universities, and research consortia across the country.



.....  
Dr Barnali Waugh

Dr Barnali Waugh (BW) Dr Sadaf Ashraf (SA) and Dr Joshua Kaggie (JK), part of the national steering group provide some insights and highlights from the NPDC21.

**Tell us more about yourself.**

**BW** - I am a postdoctoral research associate at the Living Systems Institute, University of Exeter. I am from India and joined the university last year. My research is focused on finding therapeutics against neuro-degenerative diseases and initiation of virus infection of bacteria.

**SA** - I am a postdoctoral scientist within the Arthritis and Regenerative Medicine Laboratory at University of Aberdeen. I joined the University of Aberdeen in 2018 after having worked at Queen's University Belfast and University of Nottingham. My research focus is arthritis and joint pain.

**JK** - I am a senior research associate, working to improve MRI through physics developments and machine learning. I recently put in a Fellowship for developing new methods for imaging cancer and dementia metabolism using labelled sugar-derivatives in MRI. I am originally from Utah and have lived in Cambridge for six years, with several years participating on the PostDocs of Cambridge committee.

**What did you learn from being involved in organising a national conference?**

**BW** - As a member of the steering committee, I was fortunate to learn the logistics and the technical aspects of

organizing a virtual national event. The virtual group meetings gave us an opportunity to interact with each other and remain focused on our task. The organizing committee provided us with constant support and guidance and we were enthusiastic to make our contribution irrespective of our locations and affiliations. The various networking events preceding the conference provided us a great opportunity to connect with our colleagues all over the UK and share our experiences and concerns.



.....  
Dr Sadaf Ashraf

**SA** - I thoroughly enjoyed my experience in helping to organise the NPDC21. I learnt so much from the University of Liverpool organising team, through observing and interacting with the UoL-RSA colleagues as well as other committee members from various UK universities.

I learnt about leadership skills, organising large-scale events, what goes on behind the scenes in putting together an exciting and diverse programme of events. I met so many fantastic people. I am glad I put myself forward for this as I am passionate about improving the working environment for and enriching the experience of postdocs, and NPDC21 did just that!

**JK** - You learn a lot from seeing how others do things. It takes the right personalities to lead an event like this. It takes a combination of friendliness, organisation, commitment, reputation, backing, and vision. One of the most difficult things about organising is coming up with the direction, sticking to that, and figuring out exactly what themes you want people to speak on. Every successful event that I've seen has always built on a core person or people who are primary drivers of a vision, but who are supported by others.

It was nice to see that in action, and to see people who I've met over recent years in this organisational capacity.

**What were your take home thoughts from the conference?**

**BW** - The keynote by Prof. Dame Ottoline Leyser made us aware of the concerted efforts of UKRI in building an inclusive research and innovation system and its effect on early career researchers. I especially liked the lecture delivered by Prof. Mark Reed, who told us how to prioritize stakeholders and interested audiences and create a powerful impact plan to convince them that the proposed research has the potential to make a difference.

In conclusion, the NDPC21 served as the perfect platform to bring together all ECRs and postdocs and foster a sense of inclusion and connectedness that truly reflects its theme 'New Realities, Stronger Connections, Successful Futures'



.....  
Dr Joshua Kaggie

**SA** - There were so many excellent sessions in the conference. My main take home message was that, as postdocs/researchers, we are now at a stage where we are feeling comfortable to collectively come forward as a community and raise our voices, that we want an active change from funders and policy makers to improve the working environment, provide job security and recognise the value of diversity within research and academia. For too long the academic and research culture has been such that it has benefitted the few at the top of the pyramid, and through platforms like NPDC21 we are engaging (nation-wide) directly with those that have the power to influence change.

**JK** - I attended several sessions as a co-host, and learned about resources for developing my own skills. The thing that stood out to me was how fast the conference went. I was impressed by the resources that Liverpool had put into this, which was the first national postdoc meeting that was purely online. They made the online format work in a way that I haven't seen before in a positive way.



The Academy is committed to supporting the University's ambition to create a "borderless research community," in which every researcher can access high-quality development.

If you would like to contact us about anything mentioned in Pathfinder, have a contribution or idea for future newsletters or if you simply want to get involved with this work, please email us at:

[theacademy@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:theacademy@liverpool.ac.uk) or  
[Researcher@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:Researcher@liverpool.ac.uk)

or find us on twitter at:  
[@LivUniAcademy](https://twitter.com/LivUniAcademy)  
and [@LivResearcher](https://twitter.com/LivResearcher).