



Career development for⁺ postdoctoral mental health researchers



Tuesday 5th September 2023, 12.30-1.30pm

Produced by the NIHR Mental Health Research Incubator
Postdoctoral working group
@MHRIncubator



**MENTAL
HEALTH
RESEARCH**

DEVELOP YOUR CAREER • CHANGE LIVES



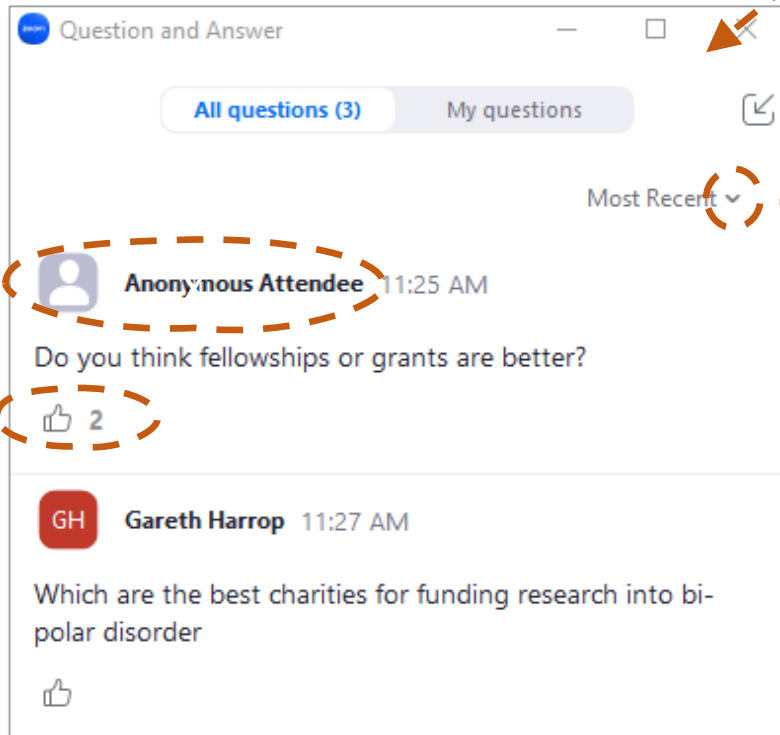
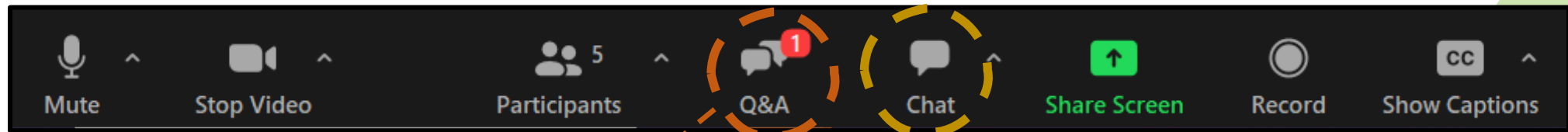
Welcome and housekeeping



Please use the Q&A function to submit questions



Please use the chat to introduce yourself



Post anonymously if you prefer

Upvote questions you most want answering

Change your view to Most Upvotes if you want to see popular questions

We will answer as many questions as possible during the webinar

If we are unable to answer some questions, a **Q&A document** will be **circulated afterwards**

The **slides** will also be **circulated**

Aims of the webinar

Who is this webinar for?

Postdoctoral researchers working in **mental health research** from clinical and non-clinical backgrounds

What do we hope the webinar will give you?

Real-life, practical examples of:

How postdoctoral careers **develop in practice** – warts and all!

Where you can obtain **postdoctoral funding** from and some tips for doing so

A **range of other ways** you can develop your career as a postdoctoral researcher in mental health

An opportunity to **ask any questions you have** about developing a postdoctoral research career





Today's panel



Dr Rachael Kelley

Reader in Dementia Research
Leeds Beckett University



Dr Ruchika Gajwani

Senior Research Fellow
University of Glasgow



Professor Ian Maidment

Professor in Clinical Pharmacy
Aston University



Dr Josefien Breedvelt

Prudence Trust Research Fellow
Kings College London



Beatrice Shelley

Coordinator
NIHR Mental Health Research Incubator



Dr Parisa Mansoori

Research Lead
MQ Mental Health Research



Today's agenda

- **Welcome and introduction** (Rachael)
- **Real-life examples: How to build a postdoctoral career** (Ruchika & Ian)
- **Funding opportunities for postdoctoral mental health research** (Josefien)
- **Career development opportunities for postdoctoral mental health researchers** (Rachael)
- **Question and answer panel discussion** (All – chaired by Beatrice Shelley)

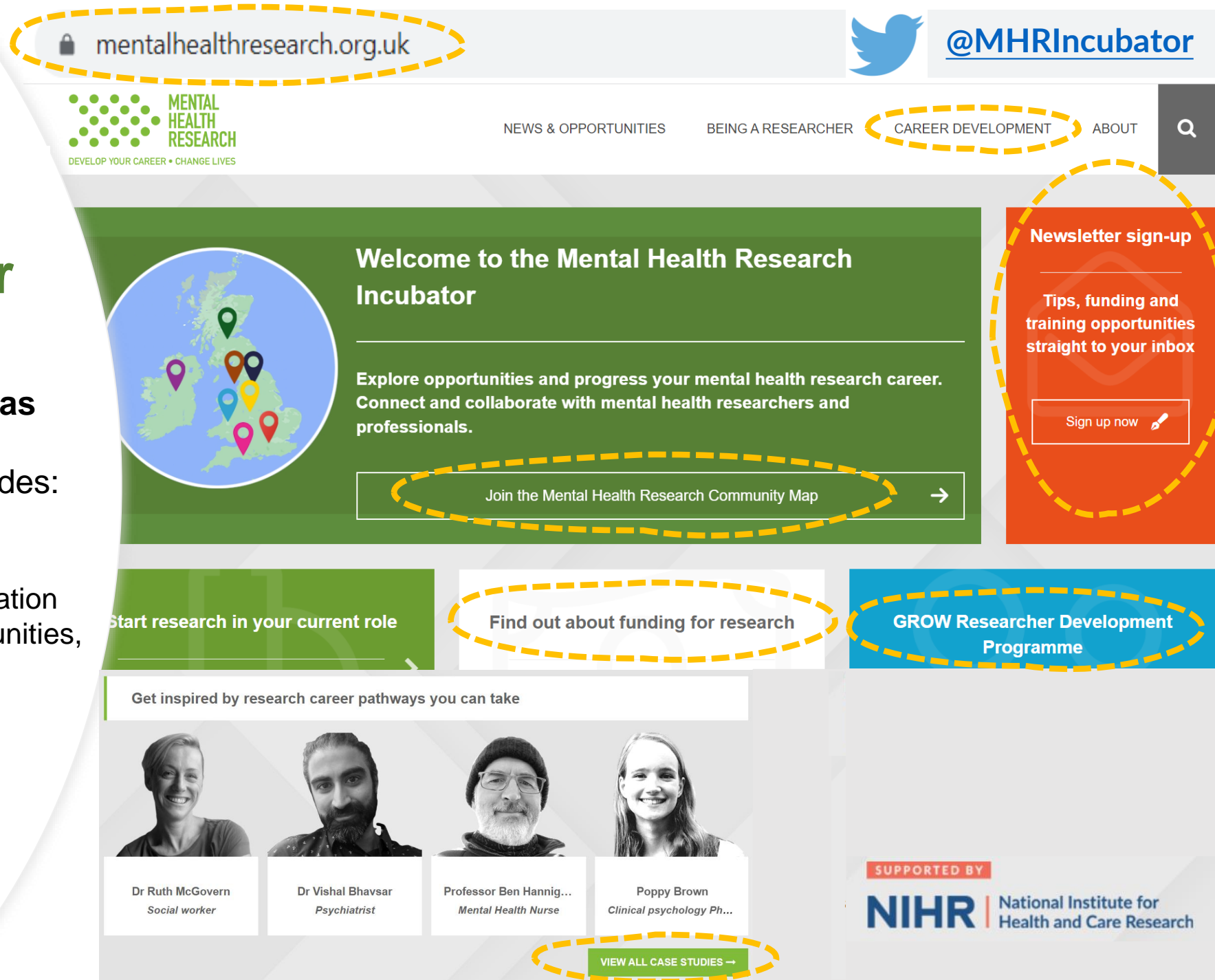
Mental Health Research Incubator

Established by the NIHR to **build research capacity** in **priority areas**

The Mental Health Incubator includes:

A newsletter you can sign up to

A website - with lots of useful information including funding and training opportunities, and real-life case study examples...



mentalhealthresearch.org.uk

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NEWS & OPPORTUNITIES BEING A RESEARCHER CAREER DEVELOPMENT ABOUT

Welcome to the Mental Health Research Incubator

Explore opportunities and progress your mental health research career. Connect and collaborate with mental health researchers and professionals.





Join the Mental Health Research Community Map →

Start research in your current role

Find out about funding for research

GROW Researcher Development Programme

Get inspired by research career pathways you can take

 Dr Ruth McGovern Social worker	 Dr Vishal Bhavsar Psychiatrist	 Professor Ben Hannigan Mental Health Nurse	 Poppy Brown Clinical psychology Ph...
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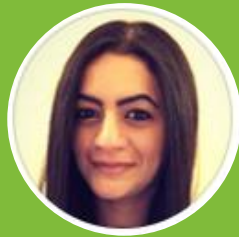
VIEW ALL CASE STUDIES →

Newsletter sign-up
Tips, funding and training opportunities straight to your inbox
Sign up now

SUPPORTED BY
NIHR | National Institute for Health and Care Research

Post-PhD fellowship route

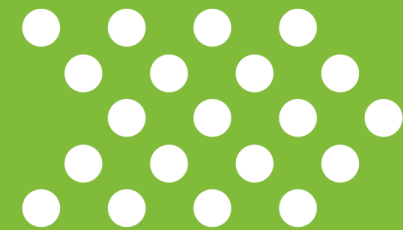
Dr Ruchika Gajwani



Senior Research Fellow / Honorary Clinical Psychologist



Ruchika.Gajwani@glasgow.ac.uk



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WEARING TWO HATS: ROLE OF CLINICAL SCIENTIST

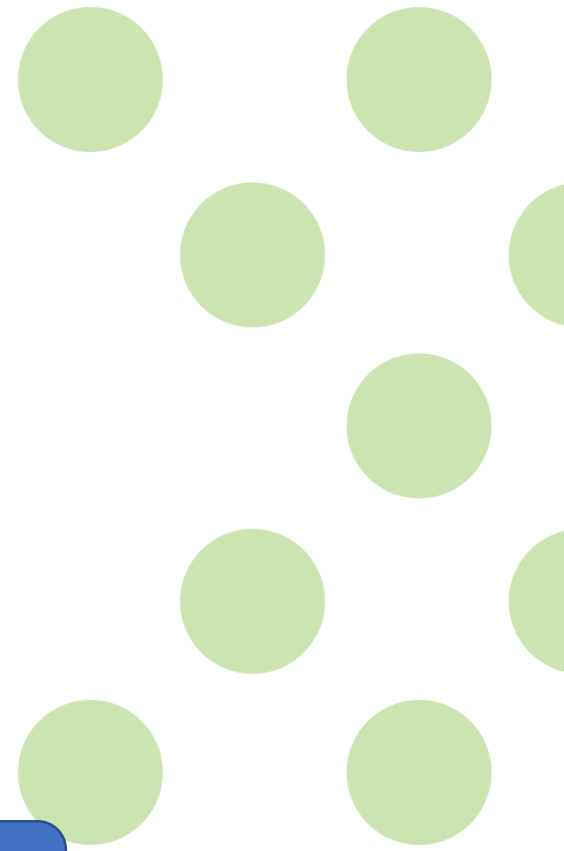
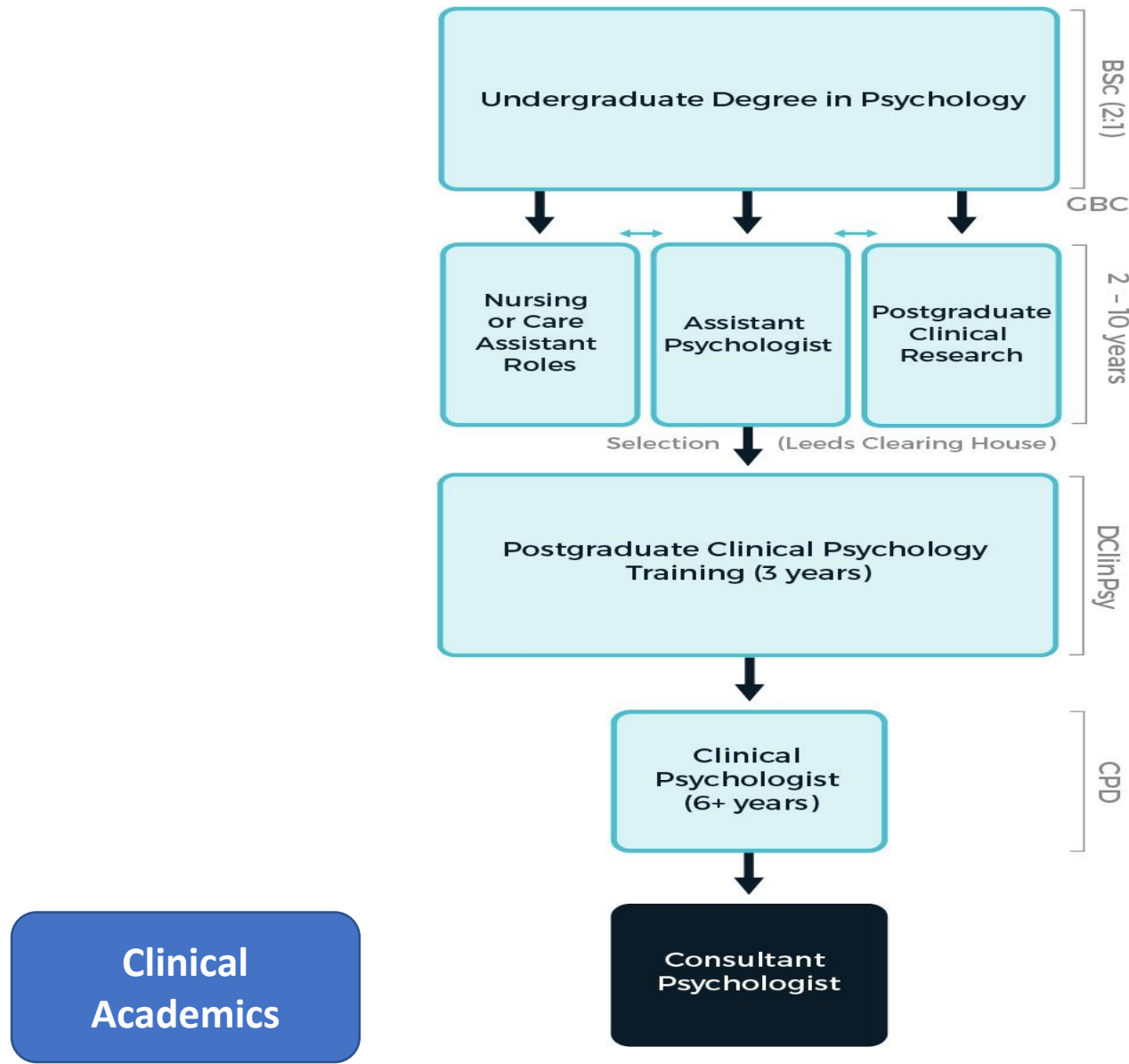
Senior Research Fellow in Clinical Psychology, Clinical
Psychologist

University of Glasgow, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

Ruchika.Gajwani@glasgow.ac.uk

[@GajwaniRuchika](#)





The Association of Clinical Psychologists UK

Research Practitioner



**Dr Lynda Russell - Lecturer
Clinical Psychologist
PhD student**



**Dr Breda Cullen – Senior Lecturer
Clinical Psychologist
Scottish Government Senior
Advisor**



**Dr Naomi Wilson
Child and Adolescent
Psychiatrist
Wellcome Trust Fellow**

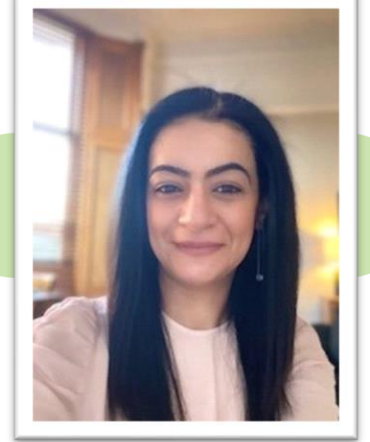
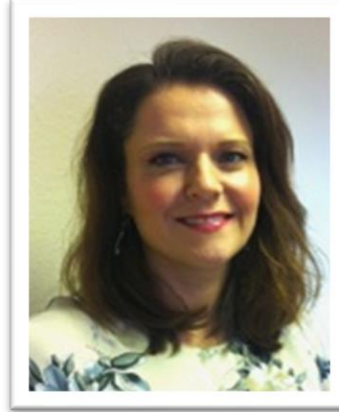


**Gary Kainth
Social worker researcher
ACE Team**

It takes an average of seventeen years
for new discoveries to be translated
into routine clinical practice

So, how can we bridge the gap?

Team



ACADEMIC CAMHS

Fellowships

- Look at local funding (for example, NIHR local funding schemes, Scotland CSO, NHS endowment funding, philanthropist funding..)
- NIHR, MRC, ESRC, WELLCOME TRUST fellowships
- Charity funding (MQ, Nuffield)
- Fellowship fund through industry (Lego, NSPCC)

MYTHS:

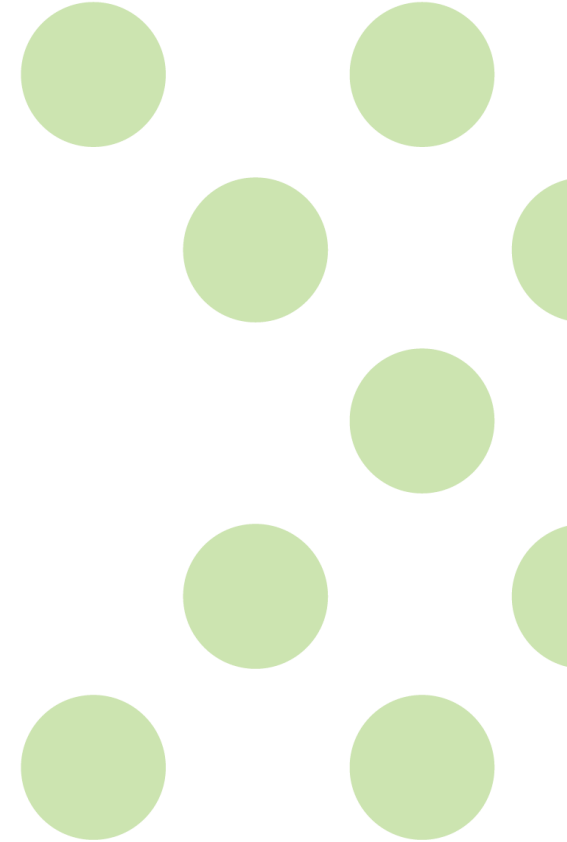
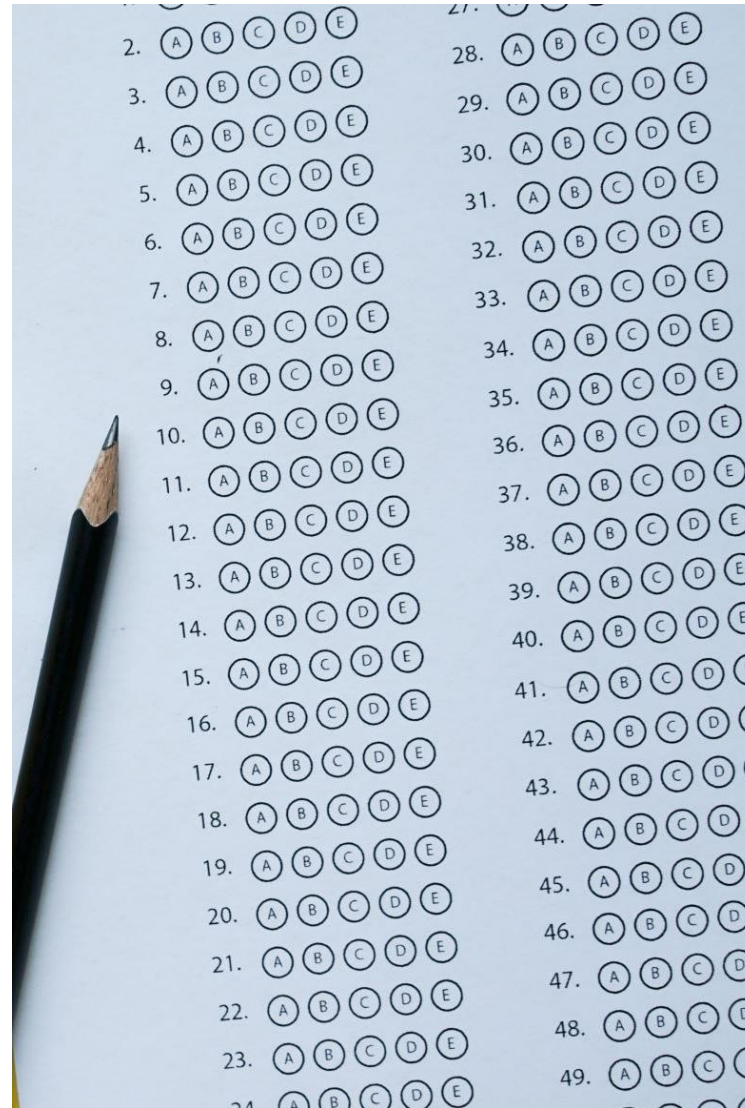
1. WRITE GRANTS

2. WRITE PAPERS/CONSTANT PUBLICATIONS

3. CONDUCT STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

4. REVIEW PAPERS

5. TEACH/LECTURE



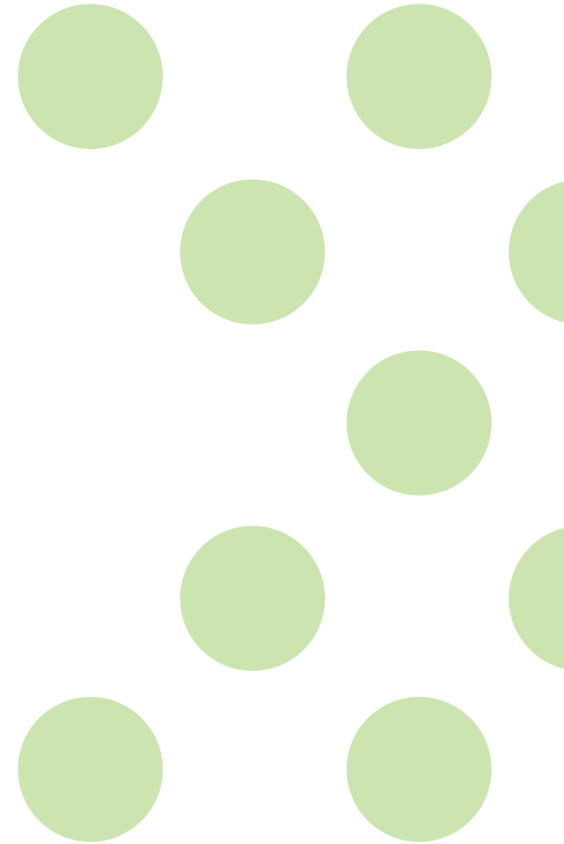
SO HOW CAN YOU ENJOY RESEARCH?

1. ASK QUESTIONS
2. BUDDY UP
3. ASK FOR TIME – IN THE NAME OF GOOD SCIENCE!
4. COLLABORATE AND BE CREATIVE
5. MENTORSHIP/MENTORING
6. FIND TEAMS (UNIVERSITIES/NHS) THAT SUPPORT CLINICAL SCIENTISTS
7. GET PAPERS PUBLISHED 😊





- Mentors
- Role models
- Creative
- Collaborative
- Open
- Science





Thank you

Ruchika Gajwani

Ruchika.Gajwani@glasgow.ac.uk

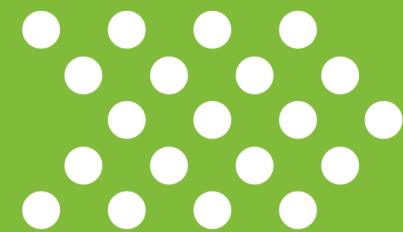
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“No fellowship here”: Post-PhD non-fellowship route

Prof Ian Maidment



i.maidment@aston.ac.uk



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Background

- 20 year + career NHS: mental health / dementia care pharmacy, community pharmacy
- Applied NIHR Fellowships (6x – three doctoral; three post-doctoral)
- Published 40 papers as NHS clinician (pre-doc) – PhD via previous publication
- Joined Aston S/L on Teaching and Research contract 2011
- Led seven externally funded research projects (NIHR/UKRI/charities)
- Challenges: Teaching & Research (T&R) contract; building research; learning from failure

Balancing – Teaching and Research

- Many academics on teaching and research contracts in non-Russell group universities
- Teaching and research – unlimited demands
- Focus on the research – particularly if few research active staff
- Learn to say “no” to teaching demands
- Collaborate both inside and outside
- Don't be afraid to approach academics for support

Building Research

- Started small eg local NHS funding, Pharmacy Research UK, RDS PPIE award.
- Recycled consultancy funding via my PASA
- Research sandpits can help but your research.
- Need focused but flexible open to opportunities
- First NIHR – MEDREV RfPB

My first grant

- NIHR RfPB feasibility study.
- Based clinical experience: feasibility study specialist MH pharmacists limit use psychotropics in people living with dementia.
- Research always take longer and recruitment is harder than you expect.
- Use the time between funded confirmed and start date.
- Publish the protocol – early win.
- Don't be afraid to ask for no-cost extension.
- Ethics designed for Clinical Trials (much of my research qualitative)!

Develop Uniqueness

- Develop novelty – what does your approach bring to research landscape?
- Novelty: clinical area, methods, ideally both.
- Use medication in the real world, in vulnerable populations.
- Realist approach
- [MEMORABLE](#); [RESOLVE](#); MEDIATE; PERISCOPE
- Re-cycle parts of the methods; asked to join other grants.
- Look for the crumbs.



Learning from “Failure”

- Fellowship – “brutal” scheme, all or nothing, very competitive, feels very personal
- Limited support when you fail
- All grant applications – element of luck, particularly close decisions
- “It’s not me, it’s you”
- Take application and apply elsewhere
- Value your work – “failure” probably worked out best, but funders need to support people who come close e.g., network of unsuccessful people

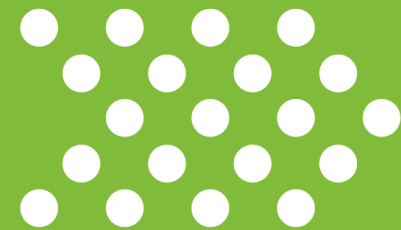


Funding opportunities for postdoctoral mental health researchers

Dr Josefien Breedvelt



josefien.j.breedvelt@kcl.ac.uk



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A quick overview

2015 – 2018 – Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust , Constance Travis Trust, Mental Health Foundation, and Big Lottery Foundation £362,000

2018 – Disability Research on Independent Learning and Living £149,657 * co-PI

2018 – Interreg North-West Europe £158,000 * part of larger grant (eMEN)

2018 – Amsterdam Public Health Research Institute £8,232 * co-I

2021 – finished PhD – University of Amsterdam

2021 – Wellcome Active Ingredients Commission £44,432

2022 – Bernard van Leer Foundation £59,850

2022 – Wellcome Mental Health Data prize £39,979

2023 – Youth Futures Foundation £57,350

2023 – 3-year Prudence Trust Research Fellowship £475,000

PRUDENCE
TRUST

Where and when to start?

Different options:

- **Small grants**
- **Fellowships** – overview [here](#)
- **Other routes** (e.g. joining lab)

This [page](#) with case-studies can be helpful to browse. You can filter funding in the drop-down.

Finding funding opportunities

'RfPB welcomes and encourages early career researchers to lead on research applications while being supported by a senior colleague who would be fulfilling the role of mentor and Joint Lead Applicant'

NIHR Health Research Panels, e.g.

NIHR [Research for Patient Benefit](#)

NIHR [Research for Social Care](#)

NIHR | National Institute for Health and Care Research

UKRI Research Panels, e.g.


Economic and Social Research Council


Medical Research Council

Charities / Trusts / Foundations e.g.


wellcome



CANCER RESEARCH UK

PRUDENCE TRUST

 The Academy of Medical Sciences



Mental health research


Alzheimer's Society
United Against Dementia

Postdoctoral fellowships e.g. [NIHR](#) (called Advanced Fellowships), [MRC](#), [Wellcome Trust](#), [MQ](#), [Prudence Trust](#)

Small grants

- **Small grants for project development** (e.g. from University/ Trust, Research Capability Funding, Research Design Service, charities etc)
- **Travel and training awards** (covered by dr. Rachael Kelley)
- **NIHR e.g. Research for Patient Benefit and Social Care.** See useful blog [here](#)
- **NIHR Applied Research Collaborations.** Spring-summer round-up of opportunities [here](#). What is an ARC? [here](#)
- **For an overview of a range of charities, [here](#).**



Fellowships / awards

- NIHR ([Advanced Fellowship](#) & [Development and Skills Enhancement Award](#))
- Wellcome (e.g. [Early Career Award](#))
- UKRI (several opportunities e.g. [MRC](#), [ESRC](#))
- MQ (Fellowships & [post-doc scholarships](#))
- Prudence Trust Research Fellowships
- Cancer Research UK, Academy of Medical Sciences
- International opportunities:
 - [Harkness Fellowship](#)
 - [Churchill Fellowships](#)
 - [International alliance for mental health research funders](#)



Organising your time

thanks to dr. Rachael Kelley



9+ months before:

Identify a funder and **read** their application **guidelines** and **remit** carefully
Get **example applications** from others, if possible
Begin discussing & drafting a **rough research plan** with 1-2 **experienced researchers**
Consider seeking [Research Design Service](#) support

6-9 months before:

Meet with others to discuss developing plans & seek their input (**researchers/methodologists, clinicians** and, importantly, **people with lived experience**)
Keep writing and **developing** the research plan and adding other sections (PPI, applicant roles, impacts etc)
Build your **research team**, send **drafts** for **comment** with **feedback deadlines** and **plan meetings** to discuss
Begin working out **finances** & let your **Research Department/Research Office** know you are applying

2-3 months before:

Write and circulate **near final versions** and **finalise finances** (with Research Department/Office)
Set up **co-applicants** on the **online application system** and ask them to **complete their sections**

Last month:

Final revisions & **final feedback meetings** with the research team
Enter application text **into the online form** well **ahead of time** in case there are glitches

Post-submission:

Relax & feel proud!



Tips for writing a good grant application

For Fellowships: Person, Place, Project. **Your** personal trajectory, how funding contributes.

Make sure to include (top tips from panel member):

- ✓ **What is asked for!**
- ✓ The **importance of the topic** (& say if it aligns with the priorities of the funder/NHS/others!)
- ✓ Well thought out and **clear PPI** and **EDI input and plans**
- ✓ A well written **Plain English Summary**
- ✓ An **application** that is **clear & easy to follow** (use headings, white space, and good linkages between work packages if you have several, to make it easier for the panel to read)
- ✓ A good level of **detail** on **actual research plans**
- ✓ Thorough **dissemination plans** and a **clear trajectory** to **benefit/impact**
- ✓ An **experienced team** covering everything needed with **sufficient FTEs**. (ECRs applications usually also need well described support from more senior co-applicants) & A clear and feasible **gantt chart/timeline**

[Webinar: Top tips for your next mental health research funding application – Mental Health Research](#)



“It’s not all about the money!”

Other career development opportunities for postdoctoral researchers

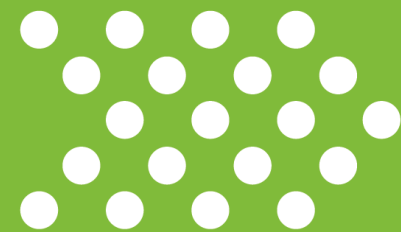
Dr Rachael Kelley



r.kelley@leedsbeckett.ac.uk



[@kelley_rach](https://twitter.com/kelley_rach)



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Postdoctoral career development opportunities

Working with others

Building and working as part of a team

You **don't** have to **do it alone**

Who you know can be as or more helpful than **what you know**

Choose wisely...



Building networks and collaborations - inside and outside your workplace

Use **conferences**, other **events**, **social media**, existing **research centres/departments/networks** and **resources** like the [incubator mental health community map](#) to do the above



Postdoctoral career development opportunities

Working with others

Examples of different groups/networks you could contact:

<https://mentalhealthresearch.org.uk/research-networks-organisations/>

Local/other researchers/research centres in your field

Local R&D Department(s)

NIHR Schools
(Social Care, Primary Care, Public Health)

NIHR Applied Research Collaborations
([What even is an ARC?!](#))

UKRI Mental Health Research Networks

NIHR Mental Health Translational Research Collaboration

A readymade list of others working in your area:

[Incubator mental health community map](#)



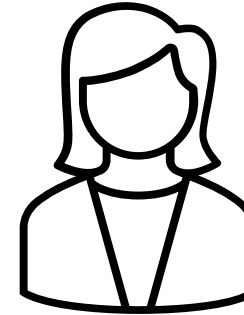
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Mentoring

Informal and more **'formal'** mentoring arrangements



Within and outside your institution

Mentorship schemes at your Institution

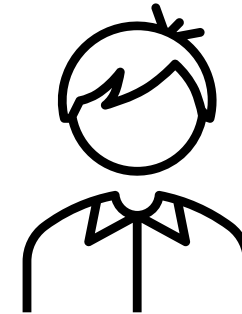
[Academy of Medical Sciences Mentorship Scheme](#) (for certain funding holders)

[NIHR Mentorship Scheme](#) (for NIHR Academy Members)

Talk to people you admire & who you think will give you good advice!

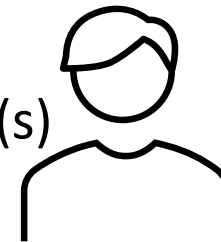


If you **don't ask** you **don't get!**



Think about **how to get the most out** of mentoring relationship(s)

Academy of Medical Sciences [mentoring advice & resources](#)





CV building/ other opportunities



Gain experience of grant application reviewing

Could you observe a funding panel/offer to review a grant application as a starting point?

Could someone more senior help with getting opportunities to do this?



Joining a panel/committee

Could be topic/mental health specific, focused on research/clinical practice/other

Good for networking, gaining experience and your CV



Find/start writing days or writing retreats



Find/start a local Early Career Research Network



Find training opportunities/funds that will help you develop e.g.

GROW programme for mental health postdoctoral researchers: <https://mentalhealthresearch.org.uk/grow/>

Travel/Training/Collaboration grants - International Brain Research Organization <https://ibro.org/grants-training/>

Travel grants: <https://guarantorsofbrain.org/grants/travel-grants/> plus many others e.g. ARCs, CRNs, RCF etc



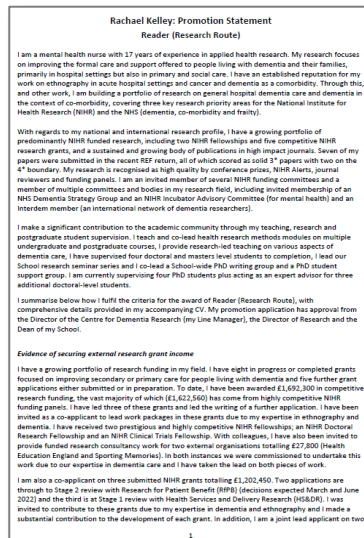
Promotion requirements example

Check what the criteria for promotion is at your Institution and think what career development activities you can undertake that will also tick those boxes...

Senior Research Fellow:

Focused on **research**, may also combine elements of **teaching, leadership, and management**

Evidence required for promotion may include:



Securing **external research grant income** (could be as co-applicant)

Original and impact-driven research

High-quality **peer-reviewed journal publications**

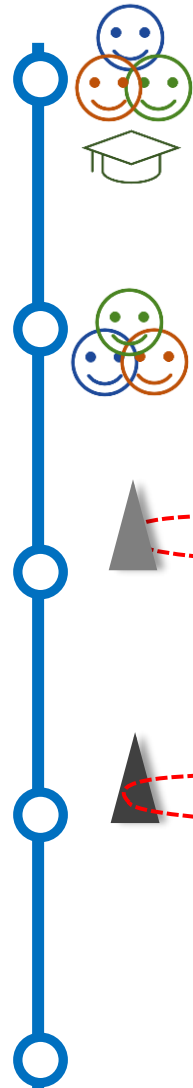
High-quality **peer-reviewed conference presentations**

Successful supervision of candidates for **research degree awards**

National standing & significant contributions to the wider academic community

A real-life example...

JOBS & RESEARCH FUNDING



2004-09	Left mental health nursing for a funded research post @University of Leeds
2009-15	PhD funding (NIHR Doctoral Research Fellowship & maternity leave x2) [£223,434]
2010-11	West Yorkshire R&D Consortium funding [£43,740]
2015-17	NIHR Clinical Trials Fellowship funding [£41,620]
2017	Left University of Leeds for a funded post @Leeds Beckett University
2017	Sporting Memories Foundation [£8,000]
2018	Research Capability funding (to develop a grant application) [£4267]
2018	Unsuccessful NIHR Postdoctoral Fellowship application
2018-19	NIHR Research for Patient Benefit funding [£155,116]
2020-22	NIHR Research for Patient Benefit funding [£149,169]
2021-22	University of Leeds Business School Challenge Fund [£26,000]
2022	Unsuccessful NIHR Research for Patient Benefit application
2022-24	NIHR Health Services & Delivery Research [£1,053,221] (with someone I met at a conference)
2022-23	Health Education England [£19,800]
2023-24	NIHR Research for Patient Benefit [£153,461]
2024-26	NIHR Research for Patient benefit [£249,744]

Didn't get 2 x jobs applied for

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Observed a funding panel meeting

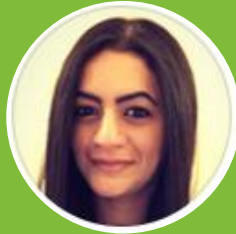
Began reviewing grant applications

[Including NIHR, MRC, Dunhill, Alzheimer's Society, Alzheimer Netherland & Carnegie Trust]

Joined NIHR RfPB funding panel & local NHS Trust steering group

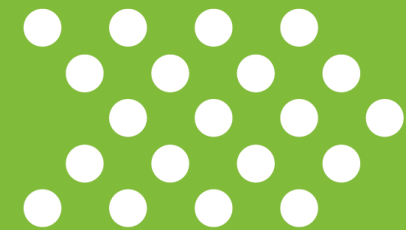
Joined NIHR COVID-19 funding panel & MH incubator

Invited member of NIHR RfSC Expert Panel & NIHR RfPB Nursing & Midwifery Special Call panel



Question & answer session with the panel

Chaired by Beatrice Shelley



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Thank you and next steps

Check out our collection of resources
for you

[www.mentalhealthresearch.org.uk/
postdocs](http://www.mentalhealthresearch.org.uk/postdocs)

Get involved with the Incubator!

[www.mentalhealthresearch.org.uk/
getinvolved](http://www.mentalhealthresearch.org.uk/getinvolved)