Alternative Careers for Researchers Transcript

Susan Kay, Chief Executive

I guess the difference between having your research funded by a charity or a charitable foundation like us is that we're driven by a charitable mission and indeed, have to demonstrate that we're delivering on that for the public good. So that means you have to show, as far as we ever can, that the research that we fund matters. This means that we want to see it being used. That might mean depending on the nature of the research, by other researchers, but also policymakers, businesses, service providers and in order for us to do that, we have an important set of principles focussed on ensuring research is funded properly.

So when we published our plan on how we were going to support the Concordat to support the career development of researchers, we wanted to take action for those who chose an academic career, but also to open the doors to alternative careers. That way we can hopefully see the research we fund being used to support evidence-based decisions and practice in the clinic, in business, in policy making and in the community.

As a funder, we are relatively small, but we are the only one focused on aging and older people. We distribute around 5 million pounds a year and we invest an endowment to enable us to do this. As part of the changes we are in the process of making, we're trying to ensure that investment works even harder to enable us to pursue our mission. To do that we're aiming to invest in impact-led and mission-aligned investment funds. Our first of these has been into the zinc fund, a pre-seed venture capital accelerator which is supporting and providing a range of opportunities for researchers to build businesses or to support others with their research. We've got Aida who's going to be coming here today who's had support from zinc and Tim from zinc who I'm sure would be telling us more about that along with his own career path.

But i'll pause there, enough from me, I'm going to introduce my colleague, Dr. Sanjay Thakrar, who's our head of research policy and awards who himself actively chose an alternative career path who will be chairing our session today. We've got five 10 minute talks lined up, and a 30 minute panel session at the end, to ask questions of our speakers, or do please pop your questions in the chat box and thank you to all of our speakers for your time today as I said we're recording the session and we're here until 12 o'clock over to you,Sanjay.

Sanjay Thakrar, Head of Research Policy and Awards

Thank you, Sue for that introduction, and as Sue did mention, I am myself a product of charity funded research. My PhD was funded by the British Heart Foundation, and I moved on after my PHD to the charity sector and research funding and i'm sure, you'll hear a bit about that today with some of our speakers. In fact, I believe Belinda is in a similar role. So, my role effectively is just to keep everyone to time and help facilitate some questions. So I guess, without further ado I'll introduceour first speaker, which is Oliver, and so Oliver has been a postdoc and has done some research in mammalian cell biology, he worked at Queen Mary University on a Dunhill Medical Trust funded Grant, focusing on understanding the mechanobiology of senescence and aging. He now works at Abcam so i'll pass over to Oliver so that he can tell you more.

Oliver Culley, Cell Scientist at Abcam

So yeah, thank you very much for the introduction thank you for the invitation to speak. It's nice to give back having been funded by the Dunhill Medical trust. So hopefully, you guys find this presentation interesting and I'll take questions I guess at the end in the panel discussion. So a bit about me a bit about my background. I guess it's roughly a traditional background, I'm not sure what that looks like these days, but in 2007, many, many years ago I did my undergrad at the University of Manchester I had a year in Florida working at the Mayo clinic looking at late onset Alzheimer's disease. After that, my first job was at horizon discovery, so we used to work with adeno-associated virus targeting different cell lines and that was much before CRISPR came along but people used to use AAV, and I used to be based up in Water Beach in Cambridge. I then went to London, and as part of the IPSC phenotyping group, so that was in collaboration with Sanger. But it was looking at induced pluripotent stem cells, based at Kings College London Campus in London Bridge, and then from there I did a PhD with my then supervisor, and that was looking at fibroblast populations.

So a PhD in cell biology, unless you guys can tell otherwise, there's a lot of in vitro work, cell-culture, mammalian cell biology. So it's different cell types but there's a general theme, my postdoc was a short one with King's College, London. So that was also sponsored by Unilever, as was my PhD and it was BSRC-funded my PhD, but that was a similar line of work just to write my corrections, and to help publish this paper that I had. I then, which is where Dunhill Medical Trust comes in, as Sanjay said I was a post-doc at Queen Mary, so that's based on the white Chapel campus, and that was looking at mechanosensing in proliferative and senescent fibroblasts and how they could sense their environment, and looking at cell phenotyping so high content imaging as well as gene expressions, rna seq and that was a 2-year post-doc. And then from that I moved away from academia and I now work at Abcam as part of the cell Sciences new product development team, and we generate the material for the quality control team. And that's where I'm currently based.

So, my current day to day. I'm part of the cell sciences new product development team as I said, We provide sellable material or sellable stock for both the catalogues and the QC team in order to validate our antibodies. For the most part it's preferred to his business as usual, which I think is not very flattering, but it's a lot of work with knock-down cell lines, treatments, we work with hybridomas, IPSC-derived cells, over expression, SiRNA etc.

I have line management responsibilities of currently four that's soon to be six, but we've got a very strong team of team of junior researchers who do a lot of this work, and that is then you know, helping push Abcam forward in terms of the relevance of its models, but also its validation of its of its antibodies and its reagents. I work quite a bit with the collaboration, so other similar companies, which are looking to sort of promote their work and promote their cell lines and us promote our antibodies too. There is a constant focus on process improvements and driving change. So SOPs reducing waste, increasing outputs, increasing quality. And then our typical sort of scientist route, I'm not sure of your guys' backgrounds, but at least from the sort of lab side we have RAs which are sort of straight out of university so your first sort of your first sort of job after your bachelor's or your masters. Senior RAs already having been with the company a bit longer, associate scientists would be having done a PHD or something similar. And then scientist is, I guess, a bit like a post-doc.

But it doesn't matter either way it's just that you're sort of driving your career, and you're interested in the work that you do and then sort of above scientists would be senior scientist/team lead and then head of head of teams, so that I guess is sort of parallel to working academia, but is a industry sort of variation of that.

And so I've come up with sort of tips and tricks. These aren't obviously gospel don't commit these to memory. It's just my sort of understanding of things and I hope it helps everyone on this call. I don't think you have to sort of Compare Industry versus Academia. I don't think they need to be distinct they certainly aren't distinct now. It is quite tricky to go from one to the other and so on and backwards and forwards. But they don't have to be like one's one thing, and one's the other, it's a little bit more fluid than how they used to be.

For me. I am not good at writing, I didn't take too much joy in writing my Thesis, or my dissertations. I know some people that are very, very, very good at writing, and they tend to go on to that sort of line of work. But in industry there's perhaps less writing involved you don't have to write for grants. You don't have to write for you know publications so that was a perk for me being in industry.

Deadlines are shorter, academic deadlines can go on for your entire life if you wish. But I find that deadlines are shorter in industry, and then that brings me onto ownership. You can't be too attached with your work in industry because you have certain goals to meet by the end of the year, and then that allows for perhaps more team work. There are some very nice academic labs where everybody works with each other's work, and you collaborate well, but sometimes you can be quite separate. They were just my findings, you might find it's very different in your experience, but that was perhaps a reason for me to come across to industry rather than stay in academia.

Just some tips, I said, like how to progress your career if you're thinking about your next steps, or if you come into the end of your time in a specific role. I would encourage everybody to get into mentoring and to have a mentor. You Don't have to have someone that's specifically your mentor, but certainly have somebody to bounce ideas off and look at your CV. And look at your cover letters and talk about different concepts that you've come up with. I've had some very good mentors across the years, so when I was a PHD I had a postdoc. I had 2 postdocs in fact, when I was in Florida I had a post-doc. There was. Say, I have a mentor currently and they will very keen on listening, and they're very keen on providing sort of guidance and opinion. So I promote people to mentor and to be mentored. If you don't know your area or your passion. When I left my PhD my then supervisor asked me what I was passionate about, which is quite a big question. I don't know if everybody knows what they're passionate about people certainly know what they're good at. I would encourage you to drive what you good at and be passionate about that. And you will find that your career somewhat follows if you don't know what you're passionate about.

An easy way to push your careers is to align with others that you respect or others that you look up to. So you can have these information interviews and you can work out what it's like to be outside of academia, or what people have as their day-to-day. So you've got people on this call we're obviously about to present our sort of findings. I've got my email address at the bottom of this email If you want to reach out, reach out. I encourage you to reach out, even if you find out that it's not the career you want, because it's useful at the end of the day.

Linkedin is tricky. I was offered to present via LinkedIn, which is good, I think, there's many bad things off of Linkedin, so use it as a tool, and reach out to alumni and join networks and join groups but it's certainly there to use for your benefit, and for your career, and just sort of promote your work.

My current boss, I know from horizon discovery she is on Linkedin. I'm on LinkedIn. I am currently employed in her team. Which brings me onto networks and committees. This is, you know, just some of the networks that I was a part of London stem cell network. They have internal sort of academic based careers. They have external Join your networks like you have a field of interest.

Mine was stem cell biology, I used to attend the SDR. Which is to do with skin research, dermatology research we came out with London post-doc network. It hasn't actually moved on too much so I went back on their website yesterday but it still has this image. Hopefully these guys don't mind me using their images but my point here is find a network, or find people that are interested in the same things as you, and if they're aren't any there then make them.

And then my last one, having read many CVs, is make sure you tailor your CV to the job you're after, or the career you're after, because it just makes it so much easier for somebody reading it and the same with cover letters. Cover letters are important to explain as to why, you're passionate about what you're passionate about, and why you want a specific role. And then I'll just quickly say this is an old slide it just shows that there are many careers within an organization. You can work in finance. You can work in portfolio. You can work in sort of data integration. You don't have to have a career in science you can work in a scientific organization and use you know your background, or your degree, or your learnings to sort of move in a slightly different direction.

I think, in the UK office we currently have 57 vacancies, and they are across all these sorts of disciplines. And I think that's it from me.

Sanjay Thakrar, Head of Research Policy and Awards

Thank you very much Oliver that was brilliant, and so I I should mention that feel free to put questions in the chat box. If you have them for specific people, you can put their names or you could if they're general questions, feel free to highlight that as well at the end we will have time for questions, and you can also put your hand up and ask them yourselves if you want but you know feel free to leave some questions in the box, and so I guess we'll move on to our next speaker, which is Evan and Evan, was a post-doc working at the University of Glasgow and a Dunhill Medical trust funded study examining resistance, exercise, trading, and healthy and frail older people. He now works for health care, improvement Scotland and I'll pass it over to you.

Evan Campbell, Lead Health Services Researcher, SIGN and SHTG (NHS Healthcare Improvement Scotland)

Thank you. I'll just start sharing my screen it all worked grand in rehearsal. So it works, it continues. Okay, I think a nod if you can see the slides, fantastic. Okay, So thank you for having me here today. As Sanjay said I'm Evan. I'm the lead health services researcher for sign, which is the Scottish intercollegiate guidelines network and SHTG which is the Scottish health technologies group and they're both Units in NHS healthcare improvement Scotland. and for everybody south, of the border which I wouldn't be surprised, is everyone else in this call what that means Is that Scottish equivalent of NICE.

Okay, cause nobody's because no nobody's heard of us So a bit of background on me, I did my first year of therapy training as a mature student back in 2008 in Glasgow. I then worked for a physio for a year then I knew pretty early on in my training that I wanted to go into research, So I went back to University at Glasgow Uni and I did a masters in exercise science. I then combined that my physio and the exercise side disciplines and did a PHD in physiotherapy for progressive multiple sclerosis, and that was funded by a studentship. I then went on to do a post-doc, a short one looking at urinary retention and acute stroke that was at GCU. I then moved on to the great trial which I'm very proud of which Sanjay described, looking at resistance exercise in frail and healthy older adults was absolutely fantastic time, that was funded by the Dunhill medical trust. I could see during that time the care and the pastoral role that Dunhill played I was very impressed with our not just being sycophantic because I'm here today. But the having a network of early career researchers which was

something which was really great and going to meetings and meeting people in a similar stage in their career to myself, is great, and it's not something which other trusts and charities necessarily offer. My supervisor in Glasgow Uni was quite surprised and also quite impressed so well done to Dunhill Medical Trust, and also at the early researchers on this call within the network. Please use your peers around you. it is quite useful.

I then moved out of Academia and into public health. My first role in the Scottish Health Technologies Group for Healthcare Improvement, Scotland. I was looking at, the process called health technology assessment And that's the process by which you determine whether the medical technology is of value to the NHS or not. So it was a big, It was a big shift for me in terms of where I was. But it was. It was a positive shift it was. It was a fun one and then after a couple of years I've been promoted, I'm now the lead health services researcher for both sign and the Scottish health technologies group, and I lead up a team of 8 researchers and information scientists so it's been it's been a good learning curve.

So the next few slides what I've done is I was given a list of questions which we could potentially address by our changes from academia. So I just listed these, and then listed my answers to them.

So the first is what got me interested in the alternative career. And how did I approach looking for a new job in the new set sector? So the first part is I really like the idea of my work having impacts, and I wanted to be in an at the area of where my work had the largest impact for that patient care.

So if you think about it, I started in clinical. So yeah, you have direct individual impact, then moved into research where you start generating evidence to support change and care, decisions, and then into public health and guidelines, where these decisions are actually made. So that that was one of the reasons this attracted me to moving into public health.

Alternatively, it was a bit of survival. I was in what I referred to as post-doc purgatory. I it's short time of fixed term contracts. I was someone who had commitments. I had a wife. I had kids, I had a mortgage, so having 18 month contracts for sometime it created quite a lot of stress, so I would be applying for everything that came along. This job advert was sent to me by a colleague. It was also one of the questions is, where do you find the job applications? jobs.ac.uk is a brilliant place to go and if it's not up there. Then maybe start looking at and NHS institutions by themselves.

And how did I find the transition and is there anything that surprised me about the sector?

The biggest thing that surprised me about moving from academia into public health organization within the NHS was the work-life balance is much better, and I didn't realize how much pressure I was placing on myself. I now work 9 to 5. Anything I work above my hours, we're instructed to take back as time off in lieu so there's a real focus on work-life balance being positive and healthcare improvements, and that's one of the reasons I stayed in the organization. So if anybody's looking for a good work-life balance, if you see a job with healthcare improvement Scotland, I can't recommend it more. It may be different for you in your, in your type of research. I was dealing with people, and these people had lives, and I was having to organize them to come into the lab and the gym to do their exercises. So I was having to do a lot of that organization outside of working hours. That may be one of the reasons which I found that it was encroaching into my into my homelife a bit more than I realized it was.

Being a small part in a giant organization such as the NHS has its pros and cons. So, my work has a large amount of impact, we decide which medical technologies are going to be used and highly going to be used across the NHS in Scotland. I'm also involved in guidelines which have large impact on the

clinical care throughout Scotland. However, I'm a small part in that process. Now, if I think back to the first document I wrote. I led a small team of four people to produce a document, and it then went to an evidence review committee. They gave me feedback on it, it then got amended according to that. It went out for Peer review to relevant organizations and it then went to the Council, and then the Council made a recommendation for Scotland. So you can see how my role within that high impact processes is a little bit diluted, and if you play a smaller part, and Oliver made a good comment about ownership, you own part of the process but you don't own everything. Whereas when I was doing my R. C. T. looking at exercise and frailty. You know I was leading this, it was for me, it was quite high profile, and I owned it, and it was a really cool result, and I got to stand behind that and say, right. I discovered this, but the impact of that is less, even though you've a higher profile. So that's what the pros and cons balance out.

I do miss the patients and the participants. So I've got a desk-based research role now, and that is something which I definitely miss but it's a bit of a trade-off I think.

What skills are important to develop to work in your sector outside Academia in general? There are loads of soft skills and transferable skills which I learned especially during my time on the Dunhill Medical Trust Trial. All your soft skills like networking, dealing with difficult situations, dealing with some of the conflicting opinions, facilitation skills, project management, time management. These are all transferable skills which you can apply to almost any job, and especially one which involves research. Interviewing, is a skill which requires practice. So don't wait for the perfect job to come along and apply for an expect you'll get it just based on your CV. Apply for jobs you're not particularly interested in so you get used to the interview process, especially for organizations such as the NHS where they'll use competency-based questions. Interviews is a bit of a knack and getting used to that process will help you for the job which you really want.

What can be done to help it stand out when applying? Be confident and state that you can do the job. Having conducted quite a few interviews it's surprising the amount of people that kind of don't sell themselves. And they say, Yeah, I probably could do that or with the right training, I might be able to learn it it's if someone comes to the door, and says I can't do it or I don't know that yet, but I will be able to do it. That's the sort of thing that can really help you make you stand out. Oliver touched on this, relate your skills to the job description, both in the application form and the application form or at the very least the job title it's it is surprising the amount of people, for example, for the health technologies group, the amount of people will apply for the job are not mention Medical technologies, or come to an interview or not mentioned medical technology with that. And that's the industry which they're trying to get a job in.

So the fact that people that don't do it if you do it, even though it's quite basic. It will help you stand out. Big organizations, such as the NHS and also in universities to a lesser extent will use stock topics for interview questions such as all the soft skills as I mentioned earlier. Like time management, project management leadership. These are all standard questions we see, which will likely to be asked, at least some of them.

This is the last one, and this is the one I found, a bit probably the most tricky, is there anything I would like to have known at the beginning of my academic career? The first would be that there are research jobs outside of Academia. this wasn't, something I really appreciated until I was sent this like my current role. I just assume that everybody had to become a lecturer in health sciences and in physiotherapy to get out of post-doc purgatory, so you don't have to remain there.

A lot of people are very comfortable doing post-docs and just continuing to do that, and have sort of rolling funding coming from different projects. So if that's you that's brilliant but if that's not you, you don't have to stay there. A good work life balance is possible. So look after your self-care don't be pushed into a situation where you're having to work all the all the hours under the sun, and you're kind of told that that's what's expected of you and again, first bit of self-care. I would remove your work and your university emails from your phone. Again, this is something I didn't realize quite what the how much of an impact that has. But you know, if you wake up in the mornings and the first thing you switch on your phone work email that's it there at the start of the day. And again I found the last thing I was doing was checking my emails just before going to sleep. So if you haven't already done this please do this and it has had a big impact on me, and when I told my supervisor I had a new job, I only worked 37 and a half hours and I didn't have to answer my emails outside of work he was like "What?!". So please please do that for your own benefit, and if anybody would like to reach out to get a bit more information about working for an HTA agency or in public health, there's my email address there, and I will stop sharing and invite questions later on.

Sanjay Thakrar, Head of Research Policy and Awards

Thank you very much, Evan. That was really helpful, and your talk definitely resonated with people I can see in the chat so again. We will ask questions and thank you for the shout out about the ECR network as well. It's really appreciated and so just to say that obviously we have an ECR network mailing list, and we also have a general newsletter mailing list and the sign up is on our homepage. Or you can email us if you're interested to be put on either. And we will aim for a face-to-face meeting of the Ecr network, you know, at some point in in the future. And hopefully next year, definitely. but we do definitely have a themed annual lecture coming up next spring, and so do keep an eye out on either on our newsletters or Twitter For the save the date. So I i've taken up enough time there with a bit of plugging of our activities, and so I should move on to our next speaker.

That is, Belinda and Belinda was previously a post-doc working at the University of Bath on a Dunhill Medical Trust funded study which aimed at targeting the molecular pathways that lead to retinal dysfunction in age-related macular degeneration, and she now works at the Medical Research Foundation, as I alluded to before, and I'll pass over to Belinda.

Belinda Thompson, Research Manager, Medical Research Foundation

Thank you very much. Thank you, and let me just share my slides, there you go. Can you see that all right? excellent so first of all, i'd like to congratulate Evan on it on his excellent choice of slide background? They Obviously, you know it's the beautiful slide of the day So thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I'm a research manager, and i'm gonna obviously talk about that.

So what I'd like to talk to you all about is you know, Why did I leave Academia? How did I become an a research manager, and what that actually is?

So, the first question, why did I leave Academia?

This is actually really simple on one level, because the reason I left is because most people do. And you know the fact is, there are not enough jobs in academia for everyone who wants to stay, and even you know, not everybody, does want to stay. So this is quite i'm sure everybody's seen a version of this of this diagram, and it's you know it's quite old data now, but it's still stands true

there just aren't very many permanent jobs in academia. Not very many people end up staying for their whole career. There are opportunities outside of academia of course and you know there's about 20% of people end up staying in research. So my career path to date. My background is in cellular molecular biology, I did my PHD at Bath quite a long time ago now in stem cell biology. I then did a number of short postdocs. I think the longest postdoc I had was for 2 years, and I did these in a few different things. I accidentally became a neuroscientist for a while. But I knew I wanted a career with a bit more stability. So back in 2015 I went and worked at a biotech, developing infectious disease assays, and after 3 and a half years I was actually made redundant, because that is a risk in biotech, it turns out and you know that happens. So after that I actually went back to academia, you can you know, if you're still in lab-based science, you can. You can come and go. I went back to bath university and that's when I did my one year Dunhill Medical Trust funded Postdoc, which was in age-related macular degeneration, which you know which was great, I really enjoyed it, but it was a short term position. I applied for grants while still there, but you know, only 20% get funded. And so I knew I was going to leave.

So I had a good think about what I wanted to do, and why I wanted to do research management. And back in 2020. I started with a different charity as a research manager on maternity leave cover. And then, at the beginning of last year, I moved to the Medical Research Foundation, which is where I am now. So just wanted to talk briefly about what research management actually is because it's certainly something I didn't know about when I was doing my PhD. I didn't know what that was, and so briefly, medical research in the UK is funded through a number of different streams, and different funders have their own remits and agendas and I'm in the charity sector same as Dunhill. But what that actually involves is taking essentially some money that might be designated for a certain disease, and then turning that into a funding call managing the funding call, and then actually managing the grants that come through that so it's really varied, and I do lots of different things.

It involves interacting with a lot of experts in the field to put together workshops to decide how the funding is going to be used. We then go through a lot of peer review processes when we get applications in to make sure that the funding decisions are fair and correct. And then, once we actually make funding awards we work closely with our award holders, and then there's you know things to do with comms, and making sure that we demonstrate our impact through the research, that we fund so it's very varied.

So, why did I choose to go into research management specifically? I had a good think about what things I wanted to get out of my career were. And I wanted to stay working closely with medical research. I wanted to do a job where I felt I was contributing to the advancement of human health. And I wanted a varied job that was involved in lots of different areas of science and the things I actually enjoy are project management, problem solving and working by myself but as part of a team. And obviously I work in an office. But at this point I just want to flip this on its head, because these are all the exactly the same reasons why I got into bioscience in the first place, I wanted to work in closely with medical research that would help human health. And these are the same things you know they're the same values that I suppose that's what my passion is these are the things that I want to get out of a job. It's just the setting is different, I don't think I've used a stapler, and I certainly don't have an inbox, but I do work in an office now.

So that's why I went into this sector and as both previous speakers have touched on. There are a lot of benefits to what I do now. I do have a much better work-life balance. I have more predictable working hours. I don't have to go in at the weekend to feed cells. I don't have to you know come home late because someone's overrun on their microscope booking, and so it's a bit more predictable. There are more opportunities for permanent roles, and I think things that, not that

surprised me, but that is a change. Is that certainly the charity sector is very friendly and collaborative. A lot of charities work together, work across different charities, you know. We ask each other for help and advice and that's really nice and it's also certainly, you know, I can certainly speak for where I work now, it's a really positive and professional working environment and there's a different kind of culture to academia. You know, last week our CEO came and thanked me for something that I'd done a good job on I mean you know it's not very often that your head of department in an academic department tells you done a good job and it's just nice it's just you know it's a very friendly working environment.

So I think if you are thinking of a career outside of academia, there are lots of things to think about, and I think everyone always talks about transferable skills. And I think certainly when I was you know PhD student or in in a bit of a postdoc, you know funk, I would think our transferable skills I can use excel But that's not really what it means it's more like, Okay, So you're good at optimizing primers for Qpcr: Well, actually, that means you're good at problem solving and process optimization. And if you can share a busy lab space, then you must be able to organize your time and have good you know, organization, time management skills. If you read papers, you're good at critical thinking. And these are all skills that employers highly value. And that's why people want to employ people who have science backgrounds and PhDs because they're good at these things, and that makes them really good, you know valuable employees, so to try and think a bit more broadly about what the actual skills are in terms of transferable skills, and not just you know, like say not just you you're really good at excel.

So there are some challenges and you know it can be tricky, changing careers, and I think a couple of things that I found hard were actually finding a job, and by which, I mean is finding the organizations that are potential employers. Because you know jobs.ac.uk is great for academic and associated jobs but you need to look outside of that and I can't praise Bath university career service highly enough. Career services aren't like they were when I was at school. They're actually really helpful. They often have list of employers that'll help you with your CV.

You know my experience is that they were very good and also, if you know a specific area of trying to look for a role in. So, for instance, you know, if I'm now looking for a job in the sector, I work in now I can look on the AMRC job alerts, the UKRI jobs because they're one of the big employers, government jobs. So you know you can narrow it down if you have a bit of an idea of where you're trying to go.

Probably one of the hardest things that I found was translating my academic CV into a skills-based CV. That's really difficult and I would say my only tips for that again are to try and break what you do down into actual skills rather than techniques. Talk about the outcomes and own the things that you did and that's definitely something that's quite different when you're in academia. You never say I. It was We did this. We optimized this, but when it comes to your CV. You need to say what you did, what your role was, and what you achieved. Because that's what the you know your employer or potential employer is looking for.

I would also say, just gone through a round of recruitment, and I would say it's important to demonstrate why you're changing fields. If you are and don't forget that if you are moving out of academia, the people interviewing you would have also made that change. So that's fine, but you know it's good to address why you're changing. Why you want to move. What are the things you want to achieve by moving, and also for the CV, The Royal Society has a resume for researchers and this is for researchers, but it's actually quite useful when you're trying to look at the skills and put together a narrative CV. So it's a really good resource.

And then, just finally, the things I wish that I had known when I was starting out. I think, you know, if someone had told me do lots of training, do you know, do lots of skilling up universities have lots of courses in project management advance excel core skills, you know, coaching and mentoring do the courses. They're often really good. They can help you know make you a better postdoc whilst you're post-docking, and also make you more employable both inside and outside of academia.

But I think the things that I really wish I had known, but really which I had believed when I was, you know, starting out was that there are careers outside of academia and not only you know, could I be good at those, but I actually might enjoy them as well. I really enjoy my job now, and this is really the career that I want, and will pursue. But it can be at times very easy to feel like academia is the only thing you can do, and it's the only thing of value. But that's just not true There are plenty of really good jobs, really good careers outside of academia as well, and I will leave it there thank you.

Sanjay Thakrar, Head of Research Policy and Awards

Thank you, Belinda thank you very much. that's a really nice note to end on, and I just want to sort of sort of chime in there about the charity sector. Obviously, I'm a bit biased because I'm working in it too but we really do as a sector work together and I find this work very fulfilling. And just to say, yeah there are organizations such as the Association of Medical Research Charities. So that's Amrc. that as an umbrella body that also helps us work together as well, and that was name checked in the in the talk. So I think I'll move on to Ainslie's talk so Ainslie is a former postdoc on one of our Dunhill Medical Trust grants at University College London, on dose Controlled Brain stimulation for enhancing motor rehabilitation in chronic stroke patients and she now works as a data journalist for the economist. So I think I will pass that on and I think you've had quite a busy morning.

Ainslie Johnstone, Data Journalist, The Economist

Yeah, my name is Ainslie Johnstone and I am a data journalist at the Economist. I've been here now for just over a year and yeah, I'll tell you a little bit about the work that I do here. How I got here, and sort of reflections that I have. Looking back on making the transition. So data journalism is basically just journalism, but with a quantitative angle. So that means obviously can be completely different things so sometimes it means we're writing a story. Taking a piece of news. So here, for example, this one about the Judges ruling in the US, where they overruled the Roe versus Wade decision about abortion and abortion is illegal in some States. So just looking at a sort of data angle on that. This was looking at new voter registrations in States after the ruling. So it can be something simple like that, just a different angle. Sometimes I'm writing about papers, scientific papers or reports that have come out that are sort of based on data. So here, for example, this was a study ata piece I wrote a couple of weeks ago about corruption and then healthcare systems in Europe. Which probably is quite interesting to many people here. And other times it's something completely different. So really doing our own research and like a real deep dive and answering a question that previously has not been known to people. So it's almost like our own research so in this piece here it was a really big piece of work looking at whether the Amazon was a carbon emitter or a carbon sink and a finding that actually overall in recent years its actually been a net emitter.

How did I get here? I don't really have a sort of clear plan, it wasn't something that you know I thought I now know what data journalism is. And this is what I want to do, it didn't really work like

that. It kind of was just by chance. So I had a sort of classic like academic research trajectory. I did my undergrad to my masters PhD and postdoc. All of that was in the field of neuroscience.

As Sanjay mentioned, I would say that sort of during all of that, I never really had a long term plan to stay in academia like I never really thought oh, I'm really aiming to become a professor. I sort of just, I think I stayed from one part to the next, because I just really loved doing research, and found it very interesting. And I hadn't really seen what the other options were. I guess I didn't really know what was out there, and what I could do.

So I was doing my postdoc, and then, obviously, the Covid pandemic happened. I was doing a lot of work with real humans and they had to come in. They had to had to sort of touch their head a lot. They would go in an MRI scanner. It just all became very, very difficult during the lockdown. Which was a real shame and I think was sort of the first time where I really thought, okay, now, it's really time to rethink what I'm doing here. What other options are there for me outside of academia? And like everyone else has mentioned before, there were other things about academia that I didn't love like the short term contracts and this sort of you know feeling like you have these very long projects and sometimes they're going great. But sometimes they're not going so well, and you just have quite a lot of pressure.

I thought okay, now I really need to start thinking about moving on. So I didn't really have a great idea of where I wanted to move on to. I think I kind of thought maybe into some kind of research, but not maybe academic research, or maybe something more like data science. So I decided I needed to be a bit more strategic about learning new skills, and in some ways it works kind of well with the problem of lockdown.

So obviously I couldn't do my normal research in in you know taking people into the MRI scanner doing scans and all of this kind of stuff. But there was a lot of data lying around which I could ask questions, you know, which were sort of related to my research, and also learn and improve my coding skills. Improve my analysis skills. So I did a bit of that, and also had always been a bit interested in maybe going into science journalism which I sort of had to kind of put out of my mind because I thought it was just way too competitive.

I also think I had a bit of a misconception that writing was some sort of magic power that some people had, and some people didn't have. And so I thought, okay, well, I'm going to tryand improve my writing skills as well and wrote a couple of short things about my research, just like for popular science things. I guess and tried to learn a bit more about good writing, which I think is something that is really neglected in academia. I basically saw an advert on Twitter during this period that said Are you fluent in R? can you build statistical models and right clean copy? We're hiring a data journalist and that, was to be honest, the first time I'd never really heard of data journalism.

So then I just went on a mad rush to try and learn what it was and learn whether I could do it because I thought it sounded really interesting. Luckily, the skills that academics have and the skills that data journalists had are actually not wholly different. You have to be fluent in R, which, luckilyI was at that point. And used to using large data sets, which was all good. Modelling statistical relationships. Yeah, all good, familiarity with research designs, all good, academic research econometrics and political science not so good for me at that point. But you know you can learn turns out econometrics, not all that different from the types of statistical methods I was using before. I was interested in current affairs, had the ability to summarize technical research. I think that's something that people in research you know you do that a lot. Whether sort of you tend to do it with a mass audience or with a concise, stylish prose in mind. You know, but it is something that

you can learn. And then, of course, I had 0 journalism experience. But I did have experience in science which was one of the things they asked for, and yeah, the rest you can learn.

So that was it. So I applied. I think I probably just got pretty lucky. And got the job. Luckily, they had actually employed someone a little bit before who had also come from academia, and he was doing great so I think that they were pretty keen on someone with you know bit of academic experience.

And maybe I'll talk a bit about that in a second and what my thoughts looking back now that I am actually in in the organization. In terms of how it differs from academic research. I actually think or sort of yeah, the pros and cons of the job. Actually think in many ways it is kind of similar you are effectively doing research. And you're doing some analysis and then you're writing about it. But obviously there are a lot of total differences as well it's a lot faster pace. So I'd say I typically write a piece of week. Not these 4 pieces I have on the slides. Here are all big pieces that took more thana week to do but typically I've got like, maybe one or 2 bigger pieces sort of ticking maybe along working on them, maybe for a month or 2 at a time.

And then I'm doing like some really short pieces that are just quicker. Take only a couple of days more, based on the news, just like short things. Saying something like food prices have gone up again this month or in a little chart that accompanies that we've been doing a lot about the war things like in the last week or so or couple of days, when Putin announced that he was going to be drafting Russian men, looking at how Google searches for how to leave Russia, or how to break your own arm or things like that have been spiking.

So really fast paced, which I think I was really pleased about. I really love because I did find in academia is just long 3 year long project, sometimes just really difficult to sort of keep the enthusiasm for. Obviously way more varied topics, as you can see. I mean I'm particularly interested in certain things and sort of environmental things or science things.

So I do get the freedom to write about the things that we're in interested in. But obviously it changes up week to week. My research now has a much, much much wider reach than I did before. So obviously, if I do something, it gets tweeted by the economist. It's read by millions of people, I can talk about it on podcast and also with them if there's a film sometimes they make films to talk about some of the new stuff that we were working on. So that is, that is great, and I could have never ever imagined having this kind of reach in academia.

We've got a great office. Very different from my office at UCL. But you know, it is a nice plus. I feel like we are really valued. Particularly, I think, like sort of talking more from the perspective of the data journalists. And we have a lot of skills that the other journalists don't really have. And people are really, you know, really sort of value us and love it when we get involved in other projects so that's great. There's loads of opportunities to learn which is also great.

I mean I've lots of these projects like yeah I would have never had any idea how to do when I first started I didn't come in with all of the skills that I have now and the pay is much better than academia.

In terms of the cons. I would say the first 3 are actually the same as the pros. So the faster pace, or in some ways is great, but in other ways it means you're always under a lot more time pressure than you were in academia. I think I didn't really know what time pressure was in academia. Yeah, and you also are under a lot of pressure to come up with new ideas all the time. It's not like there's someone sort of feeding us ideas for stories. Occasionally, that happens, but more often we have to come up with them ourselves. The topics are a lot more varied of course but it's that sort of negative

side of that is you're never really an expert on what you're writing about which is something that you're just not used to in academia you always really know what you're talking about and now I've sort of had to get used to just calling someone up asking them for their opinion.

Wider reach means you also get a lot more sort of trolling let's say which is not normally terrible, But it's something to think about. Also probably work slightly longer hours than I did in academia I actually wouldn't say that I had a bad work-life balance in my previous postdoc and in my PhD as well. I would have occasionally slightly strange hours, in my postdoc and I do occasionally still have that now but it's it I wouldn't say it's a big negative for me, and I do definitely spend more time at a desk.

Overall I think it's being a great decision for me I think it just suits me a lot better.

Yeah, So just looking back on making the transition, I think I obviously knew I'd been to things like this before where people had said, you've got loads of skills, self-management, problem solving etc.

I think I didn't really realize how many of those skills I actually had. I've sat in on some interviews now for data scientist jobs at the paper. And you know loads of people are coming from academia and everyone believes you have all of these skills and also a unique background, which, is also valued. There's loads of stuff you can practice at work like coding and writing and teaching and managing that yeah, that are easy to do just as part of your job. and Then just more specifically, if you want to get into data journalism, I think a great thing to do is just try it. There's lots of data out there you can just ask questions and write about it. There's no one obviously stopping you most of the data that we use is freely available. Stay informed and watch it for Job openings. Loads of places are expanding their teams since Covid and there's things like the Google News initiative which is like a training program almost for data journalism.Yeah, thank you for listening. Thank you.

Sanjay Thakrar, Head of Research Policy and Awards

You are the creator of those data visualizations that I just absolutely love looking at. And when I'm looking at the news so that was brilliant to see you know where they come from, and how that gets made so um I think I'll quickly move on. But please do put questions in the chat if you have any specific ones, and our final speakers are Tim and Aida. So Tim competed his PhD and Postdoc at University College, London, in dementia research, and went on to work for various roles, on in particular Alzheimer's society, where I first met Tim and he is now the research acceleration lead at Zinc and I think Sue gave a bit of background about zinc, and we have also supported Zinc to publish a report entitled building ventures to improve the quality of later life. And so Gordon can stick that in the chat. And I guess another link with zinc is through Aida and Aida is a clinical neuro psychologist and a former postdoc on a Dunhill Medical Trust Grant working at Ucl. University College, London, and the project was focused on facilitating reading in people with posterior cortical atrophy, and she has since been awarded a ukri zinc healthy aging catalyst award and so i'll hand over to Tim, and then Tim can hand over to Aida thanks guys.

Tim Shakespeare, Research Acceleration Lead, Zinc

Great Thank you very much Sanjay and yeah, really great to share this slot with Aida. We can share like different perspectives on this kind of same industry of start-up incubation, acceleration. I just want to say I agree with so much of what's already been said before. There's been some really great advice there so I'm going to try and think about what parts of it I can add what I can say that might be slightly different perspectives on what has already been shared. So yeah, as Sanjay said, I did undergraduate psychology. Then I did a PhD in dementia, looking at brain imaging and cognition.

I then did a postdoc that was funded by charity also at UCL and that's where I'm at either and through that kind of work being at you see I was really passionate about supporting people with dementia, and really wanted to do things that would benefit them in here, in now. And as part of that opportunity at UCL I kind of a long-time academic research to build an online course about some of the less common forms dementia. And I really enjoyed that aspect of communicating my research. So when my first postdoc ended, it was an opportunity for me to sit back and reflect on where I want to go next. and there were a few different things that came into that decision.

One was work life balance which is kind of a key theme throughout everyone's conversations, I think and for me. There's I've kind of learned to myself. It's not like a wrong or right in terms of that but it's okay to shift it when you need to. So at the end of my postdoc I was working really hard in academia. I felt like I needed some more space outside of that, particularly to spend more time with my family. My grandparents, who weren't particularly well. So that led me to be interested in the charity sector and Alzheimer's society where it seemed to be a clearer work-life balance, which I look forward to also the kind of short-term contracts didn't seem attractive to me going forwards.

But then, what swung the balance was going to one of Alzheimer's society conferences where they did really great work in terms of involving people affected by dementia in their research and those kind of seeing the team working there and their values, made me really sure that that was like an interesting, good place to work.

So I was looking for job opportunities with them that just happened to be one that suited me. Then I worked in the charity sector for 4 years through research communication, and then doing some kind of a research communication for fundraising, and I've really enjoyed the kind of structure the good kind of management structure management styles that people used the mix of kind of shorter term and longer term objectives and then I had the opportunity to join the innovation team within Alzheimer's society, which has a focus on building new products and services.

So it matched that combination of research skills that I like, understanding what people need what's important to them. What helps with a focus on what we can deliver in the here and now, rather than the focus on developing new knowledge that is useful kind of further down the line, and that just appealed to me quite a lot. So I've got to move into that innovation team. And then towards to the end of my time at Alzheimer's Society I found I wanted to kind of push myself further. I'd enjoyed the kind of comfort of having a clear 9 to 5. But actually I was starting to feel like I want to be doing more than this, and I think partly it was being through COVID being put on furlough for a little while. All that experience made me kind of want to be slightly more ambitious to try something new and different.

And so that's when I was looking around for opportunities and came across the opportunity to join Zinc and get a new perspective on how we can deliver things on a larger scale and to understand the commercial world as well a bit better. So that again was a shift in the work life balance back towards a little bit more work. Things are a little bit more intense we're kind of a small organization relatively new started in 2017, and I'd say it's a little bit more intense than working at Alzheimer's Society.

But that comes with like opportunity. I think as a small notation. There's not as many kind of layers on top of you, and this opportunity to drive things in the direction you're interested in It's just that opportunity comes with a little bit of pressure because it's up to you how much you make of it but that's kind of what I wanted at that particular point in in this stage, and I've enjoyed the opportunity.

So I think just a kind of couple of things about how we work. We run a venture builder program that builds new start-ups from scratch for purpose. So we have 4 missions, one of which is healthy aging,

and we build research into that by getting researchers working on those problems. By doing user research by learning from Academia and we've got some brilliant companies that come out of the program.

So day to day at Zinc I run something called the healthy agent catalyst awards, where we take learning from creating those new businesses and share that with academic researchers who have ideas for products and services and want to get them into people's hands, and that involves coaching academics through the different issues they need to work through, and designing a program that supports them to do that. And so Aida can talk a little bit about being someone who's been a recipient of that program. I'll just briefly finish with 4 kind of core reflections. I've had listening from all the other speakers and on that time. So one of them was around job security. I think that was one of the reasons I left. Academia didn't like the short-term contracts move to charity sector. I thought that was clearer. but actually what I found was through things like Covid and being furloughed, seeing, restructuring of large organizations, which does happen. It gave me a different perspective on job security. which is that it doesn't come necessarily through the contract that you have but it comes from the set of skills that you have. And knowing what skills you have and where you can apply them. And if You're Confident about that, and can see lots of different places where you can apply your skills that can give you security.

The second as I think Belinda really put really well was, don't underestimate the skills you have and you can demonstrate from doing a PhD. There's lots of things that you're really good at, and the kind of grit and determination it takes to get through a PhD is really strong. So don't underestimate those skills that you bring.

Third, I think someone already said, this is find ways to do this stuff you're interested in, follow your curiosity even if it's in small ways alongside kind of what you do in academia, because you may well, then, have later opportunities to build that out or kind of build bits of experience you can draw on to different job applications.

And then finally was, yeah on pace. I think, moving from Academia through to charity, and then industry. Particularly working like start-ups. it's a much faster pace. We rarely do things before we need to, plans come together as and when they need to, and that takes the of adjusting to. But it does make it exciting. It means you could be more flexible and agile which I enjoy at the moment as well.

So, yeah, that's it for me I want to be sure we have time for Aida as well so I'll stop there, but really happy to have any questions hopefully get some discussion going as well, and I'll hand over to Aida

Aida Suarez Gonzalez, UKRI Zinc Healthy Ageing Catalyst Award Holder

Thank you, Tim, and thank you Gordon and Sanjay as well for the invite and Dunhill for all the support provided over the years, and for organizing this event as well. So I've been asked to tell my story from postdoc on a Dunhill grant to my work with read clear and I guess that my story starts with me sitting next to Tim Shakespeare on the fifth floor of the dementia research centre at Queen Square, which is where I was working during the Dunhill Grant.

So that's how everything started and this was around 2014, Dunhill had just awarded funds to my team leads Seb Crutch, Kier Jong, and Alex Leff to develop a reading aid for posterior cortical atrophy which is a very low prevalent type of dementia which affects the back of the brain, which is the area that controls vision. And that's why people with pca experience reading impairment, and I was hired

to do this work as a postdoc in the 4 years that followed, we developed the app that we called read clear a basic prototype of the app, and this was co-produced with people with Pca.

And I can never emphasise enough the value of co-production. I have blogged and written book chapters about these experiences, because as read clear works as it does nowadays. It's all the merit of the research participants that advised and input on the design of the app from the very early days.

Once we came up with a prototype. we tested it in a clinical trial at the end of the study and we obtained positive results. So the app significantly improved, reading, accuracy, in pca, and we were very happy. But we were also out of money, because the Dunhill Grant came to an end, and then we saw ourselves with a basic prototype of an app with great potential that could support reading in Pca, but no money to transform it into a real tool In back at the time I could not apply for more research funds, because the next step I wanted to take was not about generating more evidence.

It was more about turning this software into a proper product with a nice interface, with a visual identity with limitless content, able to operate across all sorts of devices and languages. And I wanted it to be sustainable because someone has to pay for the maintenance of such a product.

But these goals of mine did not align well with traditional funding schemes, so I was not eligible for any call, and I got stuck for 3 long years and those were the years of deep frustration for me.

First, because there were more than 25 people with Pca involved in this study, and Pca is a degenerative condition, and these people were giving us a time that they did not have. So we could create this, app so it would help other people. And second, because of my own team, you cannot imagine how many people worked on the app myself for the developer Ashley the research assistant the many, many colleagues in the DRC that tested and retested the app to help with the debugging.

So I think that it was partly my determination to not let all that people down that gave me the motivation and the strength to keep looking for opportunities. And in the winter of 2021, that opportunity came. So a friend of mine, who knew about just my high level of frustration, sent me the UKRI healthy, ageing challenge call which was a special call for academics who wanted to turn the research outputs into products or services for healthy aging, and that was clearly me, and the call had just opened when I heard about it. But I had missed the information session and I didn't know how to put together this application because it was very untraditional.

But lucky me, Tim Shakespeare's name, appeared in the who to contact if you have queries or questions box in the website. So I emailed Tim and we met, and we had a conversation that really put my world upside down. So Tim is pretty much responsible for my jump to entrepreneurship. He was instrumental, totally instrumental in me getting where I am now. Because I really went to that meeting with him with curiosity, but very low expectations for myself, I didn't see myself as an entrepreneur at all. But during our conversation Tim was really good at helping me reset my vision and look at my app through different lenses, and after that conversation with him I decided to apply, and some months later I was awarded the UKRI healthy ageing challenge grant, and for the next 12 months. I enjoyed the most incredible program of support for entrepreneurs ever provided by Zinc

Everybody who knows me. Knows that I’m such a huge fan of Zinc so I have nothing but good words for them. I received lots of support from mentors, to help me making my journey their journey, throwing opportunities to me all the time. Very high-quality workshops, talks, training, pro-bono services, coaching, networking preparation to apply for more funding. The Zinc ecosystem is incredible, and I can certainly say that this period this last year with all activity, and lots of work has been the happiest year of my life since I joined academia.

During my time at Zinc I developed and launched the minimum viable product of the app that currently runs in Ios and desktop. The web version in English and Spanish and its been a phenomenal adventure. They healthy aging challenge award finished in August but my team of mentors in Zinc had already prepared me for other funding competitions, and in July I got successful with an application to the foundation for social entrepreneurs.

So I have now started a new 12 month journey with the with a new package of support, this time provided by unlimited, which is the foundation for social entrepreneurs, and this new package of support is aimed at creating my own company to keep developing read clear. So this is pretty much my journey from being a postdoc at Ucl to becoming the potential CEO of my own social venture. And thank you very much for listening one thing I wanted to say before I finish is, I wanted to say, thank you. Thank you for making this panel gender balanced and give equal visibility to men and women. I've noticed it, and I greatly appreciate it.

Sanjay Thakrar, Head of Research Policy and Awards

Aida thank you very much for that. There's obviously a lot more we can do in terms of equity, diversity, and inclusion in our events as well as our activities, and we are working on that internally.

But I just want to say, thank you. Tim. Thank you, Aida. Thank you all the speakers for sharing your

stories. Yes, I noticed a lot of themes as well before I rattle those off. Please feel free to direct questions in the chat box or general questions, or put your hand up. and I can select you. If maybe all the speakers could maybe switch their cameras on if they can and we can maybe take some of those questions. so I'll pause ever so slightly, and maybe actually, Gordon could probably read out some of the questions that in the chat box if I if I can't speed read quick enough, and what I might do isstart with a question, a general question for everyone.

Q: Ainslie did a great job of highlighting the pros and cons. All the other talks, you know, talked about different factors. But what do you miss about working in academia?

A: Belinda - I think the thing that makes working academia you know universities are amazing places. You don't I don't think there's anywhere else where you get such a breadth of ideas and people and different, just different things that people are working on. And so you know that that is potentially something I missed because it's just because of the breadth, I'm lucky that I work on lots of different now, you know lots of scientists areas, but that is something that I think is quite unique to universities. Thank you.

Tim - yeah, I think the thing I'd probably miss most the thing that got me really passionate working at. You see, I was working with individual people affected by dementia the kind of research we did involve them, and we did outreach with them. And I think that was huge privilege, and really like shaped my perspective of kind of the work that we do. But one thing I was happy that I didn't miss once I left was purpose, and the kind of sense that we're doing this for reason we're doing this to benefit other people, and I felt there was something special about academia in that having that focus. but actually, I think lots of other places have that as well, which has been really great to experience.

Ainslie - I said I miss bit of doing actual lab work and working patients and participants. But I actually think another thing that I often sort of think back on very fondly was all the talks and seminars and things that we had at Ucl. And at the institutions I was at before yeah I really missed just hearing about some really random research that someone's working on and they're really passionate about

Evan - I miss the patients and the participants in the studies that I was running in the center. I just really like meeting people, and you know you do exercise with people, and you get the stronger. You see, change, and you see them get excited and happy about themselves. You get a real kick out of that and that's something that I probably, that's something that I definitely do miss.

Q: How easy is it to find a job in in the industry sector or Pharma as a PhD graduate with no other experience.

A: Oliver – I mean, if you speak to recruiters now it's the perfect time for it. I think there's more jobs at least in the life Sciences currently, than there were prior to the pandemic. So my tips would be to apply early, don't leave it till the end of your PhD and then wonder what you're going to do. You have to have these ideas as you go along it's not too late. So obviously reach out to people and put the wheels in motion. But you know, for whichever all you go into it's quite easy ish to stay in Academia because you know how to do it. It's a bit harder to leave academia but as Ainslie and Belinda said, you need to think about how your skills are transferable and really sort of promote those in your interviews or across your CV and cover letter. But I think you know the market is good currently. There's plenty of roles across Cambridge across the UK and further afield. So you just need to start looking and have these conversations.

Q: If you're recruiting research manager roles, how many years of post doc do you think are necessary?

A: Belinda - So you don't have to have any you can come in as a fresh PhD. Graduate, or having done some post-docking, and the difference might be the level you go in at the longer you've been post-docking. Obviously the more experience you have as a senior postdoc, you have experience of more strategic thinking, of training junior members of staff, of potentially mentoring and coaching, and those are all things that you can bring to a research manager in a charity sector type role.

A lot of it is project management so you know essentially which is what you do when you're doing your PhD. Or when you're doing a postdoc you just have a variable number of years of that type of experience. So don't be put off you don't have to have done a certain number of years post-docking at all. It helps to understand what a research manager role actually is how research funding actually works. And then, obviously, if you've done a bit of postdocking, you have a bit more of a network. But yeah, that it it's not it's not a requirement.

Follow up Q: What kind of roles should I be looking at for a PhD graduate?

A: Belinda – So it depends on the organization, our organization is quite small so we have Grants officers, a couple of senior Grants offices, and then we have the research managers at bigger organizations. So at UKRI. They, I think, have more layers, but as a as a PHD graduate you should be able to go in at Research Manager Level, because you know, or at least senior Grants officer. You know the Grants at our organization. The Grants officer roles are those are sort of graduate entry level roles like I say it's a bit different at different organizations.

I think, at Ukri a lot of people go into the peer review as an as a way of going in and then they move into the policy and strategy type roles. But people, I think, often move up quite quickly through the peer review process. So you get some experience of that side of things, but bigger organizations. You

have more scope to move around. Same is true if you know Wellcome and see CRUK in the big organizations.

Q: What is the feeling of career progression in your respective sectors?

A: Tim - I think this is quite a hard one to answer, maybe just like one piece of advice that I've had is like just stalk people on Linkedin and see what they've done. like it's been quite interesting to see all that person in the position, I think, is really interesting Like, How do they get there? How many years they spend in different roles? that can give you a perspective, not just for one person like you get a picture of lots of different people in different kinds of roles. And you start to get an idea of how people have moved across roles. how they built up their experience, how long it's taken them, and I think that's quite useful.

Sanjay Thakrar, Head of Research Policy and Awards

And I guess i'll just wrap up and say thank you very much to all the speakers who, for all you know everything they've said, all their advice, or you know all the sort of topics that have come up really interesting thank you to everyone who's attended everyone who's put some questions or comments, and we will endeavour to sort of follow those up and we'll be sending out a feedback survey and I think Gordon might be putting that he has in the in the chat and we'll hopefully record this meeting. We have recorded it, and we'll splice it up accordingly, and share that as well as long as we have all the appropriate permissions. So I guess I just want to say thank you and have a good rest of the day. And Sue, Would you like to add anything?

Susan Kay, Chief Executive

I just wanted to say, Thanks very much everybody, and I mean actually, this is linked to, you know, good practice and networking career development. All of our speakers have very kindly said that they will be prepared to be contacted. So if you do have questions, please take them up on that offer. you know it's a great offer, thank you for doing that. So yeah, if there are questions that you want to follow up on that opportunity, thanks to everybody, and we very much hoped seeing you all, joining our annual lecture in the spring, and we will be in touch about that. So take care everybody, goodbye.