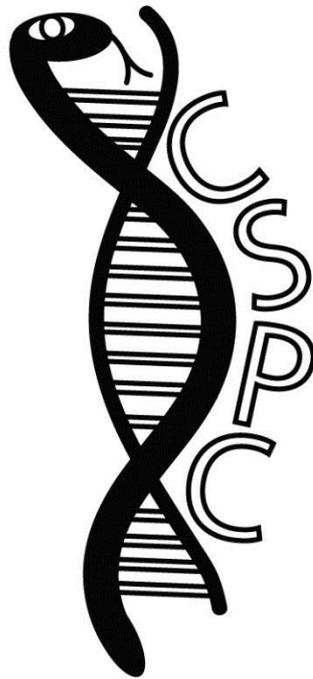




**UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE**  
Clinical School  
Postdoc Committee



**Clinical School Postdoc Committee  
Report for 2014-2016**

## Preface

This report was prepared for the first Annual General Meeting of the Clinical School Postdoc Committee held on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2016. The purpose of this document is to:

- present the origins of postdoctoral staff representation in the School of Clinical Medicine at the University of Cambridge
- summarise activities, achievements and establishment of the Clinical School Postdoc Committee over the first two years of its existence
- outline opportunities, ideas and possible future directions for the next year

## Origins of the Clinical School Postdoc Committee

The need and, indeed, formation of a postdoctoral representation group within the Clinical School was initiated during the summer of 2014 by a group of postdocs following the first meeting of the University's Departmental Postdoc Committee Chairs Network (DPCCN). Postdocs from several departments based on the Addenbrooke's site recognised a need for a School-wide entity which could help create a network for the large population of non-clinical researchers within the Clinical School.

A Postdoc Working Group was formed with strong support from the Clinical School (CS) and the Office for Postdoctoral Affairs (OPdA). Athena SWAN lead - Professor Fiona Karet (currently CS Director of Organisational Affairs), University's Postdoctoral Staff Coordinator - Joy Warde and head of the OPdA – Karina Prasad were instrumental in incentivising and facilitating the early work. 18 postdocs representing approximately half of the Clinical School departments and institutes met for the first time in October 2014. The Group continued its work throughout the academic year 2014/2015 with invaluable support from CS Equality and Diversity coordinator - Victoria Smallbone. The first year of the CS Postdoc Working Group activity culminated in the Clinical School Postdoc Day, which was organised on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2015.

An enthusiastic response of the first Postdoc Day attendees, as well as feedback received from the School management, were strong incentives to continue establishing postdoctoral staff representation within the Clinical School and facilitating further activities for postdocs based on the Biomedical Campus. The group of postdocs involved in the organisation of the first Postdoc Day agreed to form a Clinical School Postdoc Committee and initiated discussion about the Committee goals, structure, responsibilities and strategy. Building on the success of the first Postdoc Day, the Committee also decided to organise a similar event the following year, which took place on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

## Committee purpose and goals

The initial aim of the Postdoc Working Group was defined as “to create and/or improve a postdoc ‘network’ for the large population of non-clinicians at the Clinical School”. The working group, during its first meeting, expressed a desire to gain “a more coherent feeling of a postdoc ‘community’ at the Clinical School” and concluded “the term postdoc ‘community’ was not recognized due to the diffuse, geographically scattered, short-term contracted postdoc population”. To address this, the Group decided to organise a Postdoc Day “to provide a focus for the postdoc community and raise the profile of the large postdoc population within the Clinical School”. Additionally, the Working Group decided to focus on how to improve communication and representation of the non-clinical postdocs at the Clinical School in a sustainable way.

Lately, the purpose of the Clinical School Postdoc Committee was defined in the Terms of Reference prepared for the approval by the first Annual General Meeting and summarised in the following points:

- To establish a Community of Postdocs in the Clinical School and other research institutes located within the Cambridge Biomedical Campus or affiliated with the Clinical School
- To increase the visibility, provide a representative voice for the Clinical School Postdocs Community
- To provide the opportunity for interaction, encourage collaboration and facilitate researcher development for Postdocs

## Committee membership

The formation of the initial Postdoc Working Group, which later turned into the Clinical School Postdoc Committee was a grassroots initiative, reflecting the collegiate governance model that is fundamental for the University of Cambridge. Since the beginning, there was a strong incentive to get a School-wide representative membership. However, the complicated departmental structure of the Clinical School and, especially, uneven distribution of postdocs among departments, institutes and laboratories, rendered it unreasonable to limit, formally, the number of committee members or the number of members representing given departments. Instead, the Committee decided to adopt the most open and accommodating model accepting all members expressing an interest in getting involved with the Clinical School Postdoc Committee activities.

There were many postdocs who contributed to the Working Group and Committee's work over the past two years and we would like to express our gratitude to them all for their time and effort. The Committee would like to especially recognise Helen Brown and Claire King née Dawson, the first co-chairs of the Postdoc Working Group, as well as Hannah West, Hilda Mujcic and Mae Goldgraben who lead the organisation of first CS Postdoc Day. All other group members that assisted with advice, support and help on the actual Postdoc Day were Jacek Mokrosinski, Laura Towns, Carl Spickett, Marko Tainio, Barbora Silarova, and Adina Feldman. After the first Postdoc Day, Jacek Mokrosinski, Deanne Patmore, Joanne Emery, Laura Towns, Carl Spickett and David Shorthouse formally joined the Committee, with several other postdocs occasionally attending Committee meetings or contributing in other ways. Halfway through the academic year 2015/2016, Jacek Mokrosinski joined Claire King as the Committee co-chair, following Helen Brown's resignation.



Clinical School Postdoc Committee 2015-2016

Hilda Mujcic, Hannah West, David Shorthouse, Mae Goldgraben, Jacek Mokrosinski, Joanne Emery, Claire King, Carl Spickett  
*Insert: Deanna Patmore, Laura Towns*

In order to assure the Committee's sustainability and to maintain its School-wide representative character, the Committee decided to organise an Annual General Meeting, during which new members could be recruited and appointed to the Committee. The first such meeting was called for 26<sup>th</sup> October 2016 and it is foreseen that an AGM will be organised to reoccur each Michaelmas term.

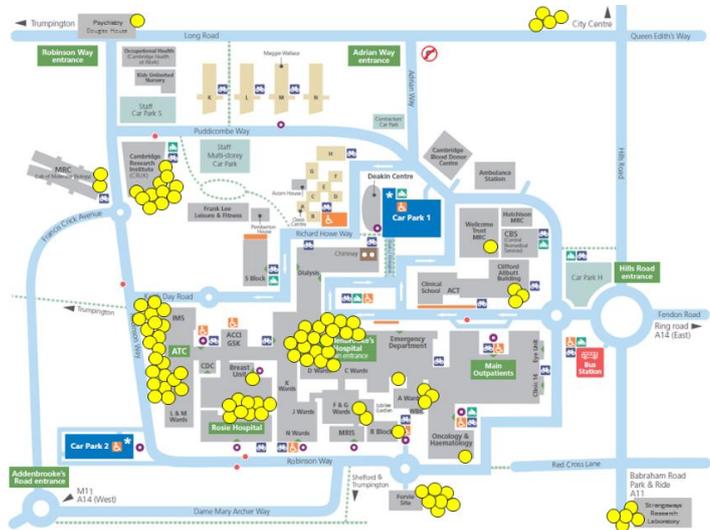
## Building a sense of Community

The number of postdocs based on the Addenbrooke's site is estimated at around 600, the majority of who are non-clinical researchers. Despite the quite centralised governance structure of the Clinical School, this large community of postdocs had no formal representation, any dedicated space for interaction or means of communication. The initial Postdoc Working Group and later CS Postdoc Committee aimed at building a sense of community by addressing these scarcities.

The Postdoc Working Group secured and set up a website (<http://postdocs.medschl.cam.ac.uk/>) dedicated for Clinical School Postdocs, launched on the eve of the first CS Postdoc Day in September 2015. In the run-up to the first CS Postdoc Day, the Clinical School bi-weekly newsletter introduced a section dedicated to postdocs. At the same time, a mailing list reaching all postdocs employed at the Clinical School was arranged with the help provided by the CS Human Resources team and is now run by dedicated CS Postdoc Committee Communication Officers. The Committee also operates a Twitter account, which has over 80 followers. In order to strengthen the Committee identity, a logo – amalgamate of DNA helix and the Aesculapian snake was designed and the snake has become a recurrent motif for the Committee's graphical communication.

# 1<sup>st</sup> Clinical School Postdoc Day (2<sup>nd</sup> September 2015)

The Clinical School Postdoc Day was the first big event targeted for postdocs from all Addenbrooke's departments, institutes and laboratories organised by the Postdoc Working Group. The main objectives were: 1) to raise a profile of the large postdoc community, 2) to allow inter-departmental networking opportunities and 3) to provide information and guidance specifically tailored for non-clinical postdocs from the Clinical School. Over 100 postdocs from across the Biomedical Campus and beyond attended on the day. However, a survey of attendees' departmental affiliation revealed uneven representation with especially low numbers of postdocs coming from relatively large departments such as the Cambridge Institute for Medical Research (CIMR) and the MRC Laboratory for Molecular Biology. The latter one, having the status of a University Partner Institution rather than being an integral part of the Clinical School, also houses a Department of Medicine's University Research Unit with a substantial number of University employed postdocs.



The aim of the day became a whistle-stop tour of a few services available to the Clinical School postdocs, including an inspiring scientific talk. The programme began with an opening address by the Regius Professor of Physic, Patrick Maxwell, which was followed by an introduction to the OPdA by Karina Prasad and a greatly invigorating keynote lecture by Dr Helen Lee. A refreshments break gave the opportunity for postdocs to meet other fellow postdocs from other departments. During the second part, short introductions to the Careers Service (by Sally Todd), the Clinical School Human Resources (by Caroline Newman), the USS pension scheme (by Sue Curryer), and an overview of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus development programme (by Jeannette Walker) were presented. A lunch served right after the official closing of the programme gave another networking opportunity for all attendees while those, who were interested, could join a walking tour of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus development led by Jeannette Walker.

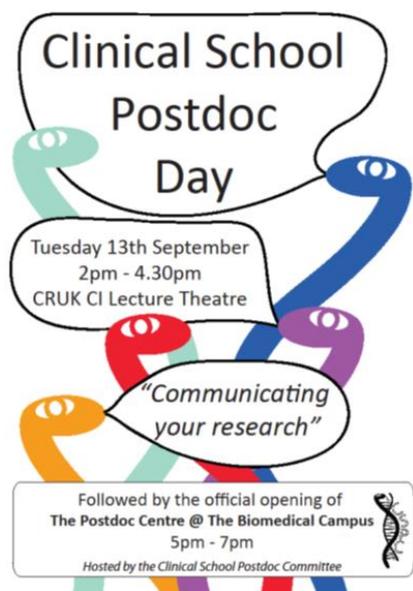
The feedback received from the audience revealed Helen Lee's keynote lecture stole the show with talks about the development of Cambridge Biomedical Campus and the introduction to USS pension scheme also attracting a lot of attention. The attendee survey also contained questions about expectations for future events to be organised by the Committee. The idea of a monthly seminar series received a generally positive response, with lunchtime hours as the most convenient while topics encompassing career development, mentoring, HR and wellbeing-related matters such as pensions or childcare services were indicated by the responders as potentially interesting.



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## 2nd Clinical School Postdoc Day – September 13th, 2016

The theme of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Clinical School Postdoc Day was research communication to a broad audience. We were fortunate to have two excellent speakers: Dr Giles Yeo (IMS – Metabolic Research Laboratories), who has recently turned BBC presenter and Professor Richard Gilbertson (CRUK-CI). Giles' infectious personality shone through in his talk, and his fantastic tips and advice were interspersed with hilarious personal anecdotes to take away. Richard Gilbertson gave a very personal look at his research career and life in science, which was full of inspiration and included an insightful look into how he communicates his work. The event included a "postdoc clinic" - a roadshow of many University services (OPdA, PdOC Society,



**Communicate your Research!**   
**Clinical School Postdoc Day**

Tuesday 13th September 1.30 - 4.30 pm  
CRUK CI Lecture Theatre

**Richard Gilbertson**  
Keynote Speaker

**Giles Yeo**  
Guest Speaker

**OPdA Update and Regius Address**

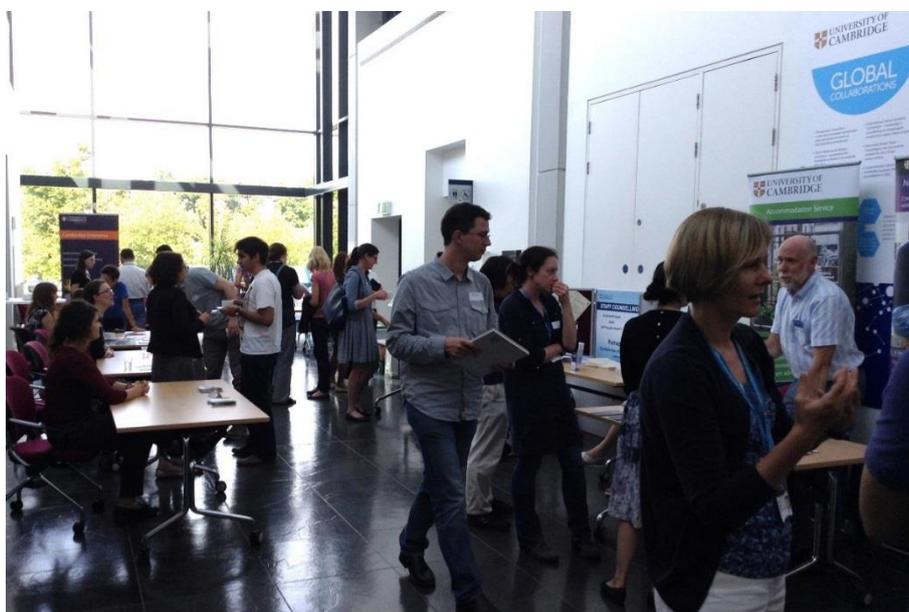
**Clinical School Postdoc Clinic**

Afterwards please join us for the official opening of  
The Postdoc Centre @ The Biomedical Campus  
5pm - 7pm

Registration details on our website and twitter  
[@cambridgeCSPC](https://twitter.com/cambridgeCSPC) [www.postdocs.medschl.cam.ac.uk](http://www.postdocs.medschl.cam.ac.uk)

Accommodation Service, Cambridge Enterprise, College Affiliations, Counselling Service, Clinical School HR, Personal and Professional Development, USS Pensions, Research Operations & Equipment) during which the attendees could gain information from the various resources available to them during their time in Cambridge. The final part of the Day also included an update from the Director of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPdA) – Dr Rob Wallach and an address by the Head of the Clinical School – Regius Professor of Physic Patrick Maxwell.

Over 130 postdocs registered for the event with nearly 100 attending, covering most Clinical School departments, institutes and laboratories. The feedback collected from the participants clearly stated that both the communication workshop and keynote talk were greatly inspiring and entertaining, whilst many appreciated the roadshow introducing them to new opportunities they had not heard about. A balance of good scientific content, workshop and networking opportunities but also attention to services addressing postdoc needs were the most important elements of a successful event. It was also noted in the survey responses, that people would be more open to attending a longer event in the future. The organisation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Postdoc Day was greatly supported by Veronica Egorova – events coordinator at OPdA and Victoria Smallbone – CS Equality and Diversity coordinator.



## Postdoc Centre @ Biomedical Campus

The most recent Postdoc Day was concluded with an opening ceremony of the Postdoc Centre @ Biomedical Campus. These new premises are exclusively dedicated for postdocs in the refurbished Clifford Albutt (“old” MRC-LMB) building, and will be run by OPdA. It will be an invaluable resource for researchers based on the Addenbrooke’s site serving as a hub for the community, a base for future events and dedicated University services. The first Postdoc Centre on Mill Lane in central Cambridge indisputably generated new possibilities for the interaction and development of postdocs. We are hoping that the new Postdoc Centre @ Biomedical Campus will repeat the success of its predecessor.



## Facilitation of other events for postdocs

Apart from organisation of a “flagship” Clinical School Postdoc Day, the Committee cooperated with other groups for organising events at the Biomedical Campus, which would be of particular interest for Clinical School postdocs, including the Postdoc Masterclass Committee, the PdOC Society and the Addenbrooke’s Graduate Forum. We were promoting, and will continue to do so, these kinds of events through the CS postdoc mailing list and Twitter, as well as strongly advocating for the organisation of some of these events on the Biomedical Campus. We can proudly state that in spring 2016 the first Postdoc Masterclass workshop was organised away from its usual location at the Postdoc Centre on Mill Lane, but at the CRUK-CI lecture theatre. Several Masterclasses for the academic year 2016/2017 are also planned to take place at the new Postdoc Centre, with the hope that another workshop will be organised for spring 2017.

## Representation of CS Postdocs

Members of the Clinical School Postdoc Committee were actively involved in the activities of the Departmental Postdoc Committee Chairs’ Network (DPCCN), since its foundation. Contribution to the DPCCN work as well as information obtained at its meetings and experience shared with other Network members has been indeed very helpful and inspiring for our Committee. We expect the representation by a Committee co-chair, or other delegated Committee individual, will continue to be fruitful.

Quite recently, the Committee was also invited to represent the postdoctoral staff members as an observer at the Clinical School Council (again represented by one of the co-chairs). The Committee met this invitation with great appreciation and hopes it will result in a stronger involvement and raising the voice of postdocs in the governance of the Clinical School.

## Future goals and directions

The initiative to form a postdoctoral staff representation group at the Clinical School seems to be worthwhile. Within two years of existence, the CS Postdoc Committee has defined its goals and gained recognition as an entity. The Committee's structure, role and activities were, still are and always will be evolving. However, the foundations were laid and the first milestones have already been achieved.

The postdoctoral community at the Biomedical Campus is growing and its needs have to be recognised and addressed. The CS Postdoc Committee has a very important role, in listening to the postdocs' voice and representing them within and beyond the Clinical School. It also needs to assist postdocs throughout their time at the Biomedical Campus, help with their integration, development and progression onto their next destination.

Recent developments, such as opening of the new Postdoc Centre and involvement of the Committee's representative voice in the work of the Clinical School Council, create new possibilities and position the Committee at the heart of the Clinical School "ecosystem". Intensive development of the Biomedical Campus, with new departments, research facilities, public and commercial entities moving onto the Addenbrooke's site also brings new opportunities. It would be advisable for the future CS Postdoc Committees to take advantage of all these events.