



Social Research Association North presents...

Routes into Research

22nd November 2023

Host: Georgina Culliford, Qa Research

Speakers:

Amelia Clayton, The Young Foundation

Olivia Brown, HMRC

Simon Maydew, Verian

Skye Curtis, MEL Research

Peter Traynor, Youth Futures Foundation



Housekeeping

- Fire exits
- Drinks available
- Toilets
- Video recording

- Timings
 - 4-5pm – Presentations
 - 5-6pm – Q&A and Networking

- SRA colleagues
 - Georgina Culliford – SRA North committee chair & Qa Research
 - Naomi Day – SRA trustee & Freelance (Daylight Research)
 - Laura Byrne – SRA North committee & Dept for Business and Trade
 - Tom Yeadon – SRA Operations Manager

My Research Journey

Amelia Clayton

About

The Young Foundation is the UK's home for community research and social innovation. As a not-for-profit, we bring communities, organisations and policymakers together to shape a fairer future, driving positive change and supporting collective action to improve people's lives.

How did I get here?

Education

- A-Level sociology really started my desire to get involved with research
- Carried on studying sociology at University
- Mostly focused on qualitative methods, especially Interviews
- Completed my masters and graduated!... Into a pandemic





Job hunting

- Research positions were few and far between – and most were based in London exclusively
- Joined Universal Credit for additional job seeking support
- It was through UC that I was made aware of the Kickstart Scheme

Kickstart Scheme

- I was hired as a peer researcher at The Young Foundation
- Worked on mini projects which covered multiple areas of interest
- The projects I worked on were: 'LGBTQ+ young people's experiences in employment 2021'; and 'Young People and Fatphobia'



"Joining The Young Foundation meant a glimpse into a research career, learning transferable academic skills and contributing to research of topics I care about"- Ellen Goddard

"I want to help uplift the voices of marginalised communities, so working for The Young Foundation is an exciting opportunity to do this, whilst also getting experience in the social research field"-
Amelia Clayton

"I wanted to join The Young Foundation so I could contribute to something I believe would bring about change. I strongly believe people's opinions have incredible value and I also wanted my voice to be heard"- Tyler Cunniffe

"i joined to help and work with people who were similar to me"-
Jonah Celestine



Research Officer

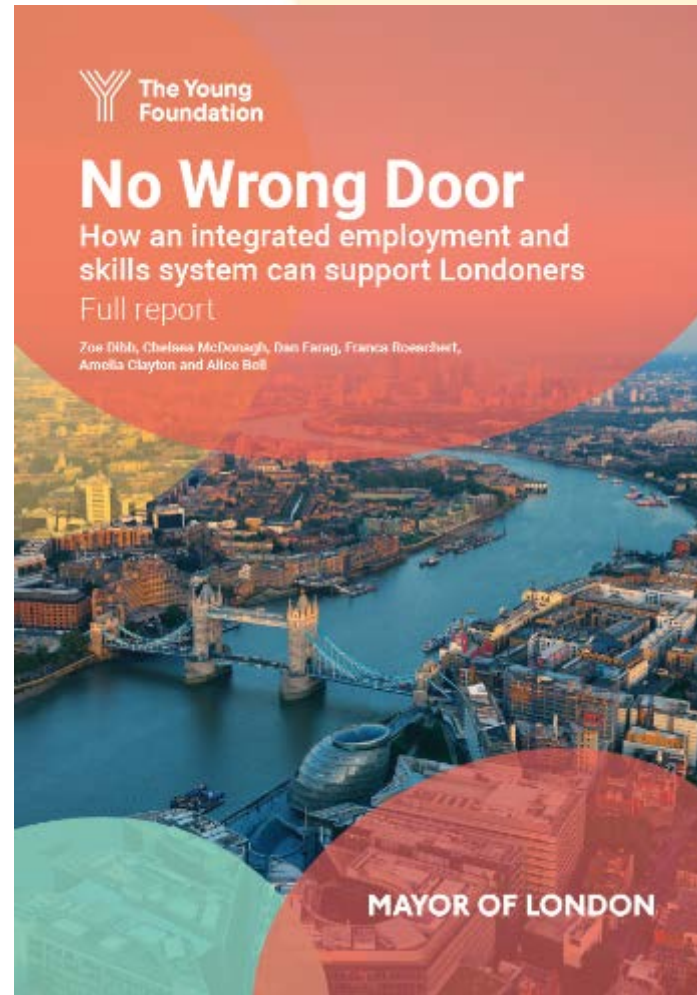
- Started my role in Jan 2022
- Work from home so most of my work is based online
- I have the privilege to meet and work with a range of amazing people





Typical tasks of an Research Officer

- Managing and keeping track of peer researchers and their work – training, check ins, overseeing their work
- Recruitment – development of social media assets, management of sign up forms, shortlisting, navigating barriers
- Scheduling and conducting interviews – whether this be for a peer researcher role or as a part of research
- Analysis of data
- Client management
- Report writing

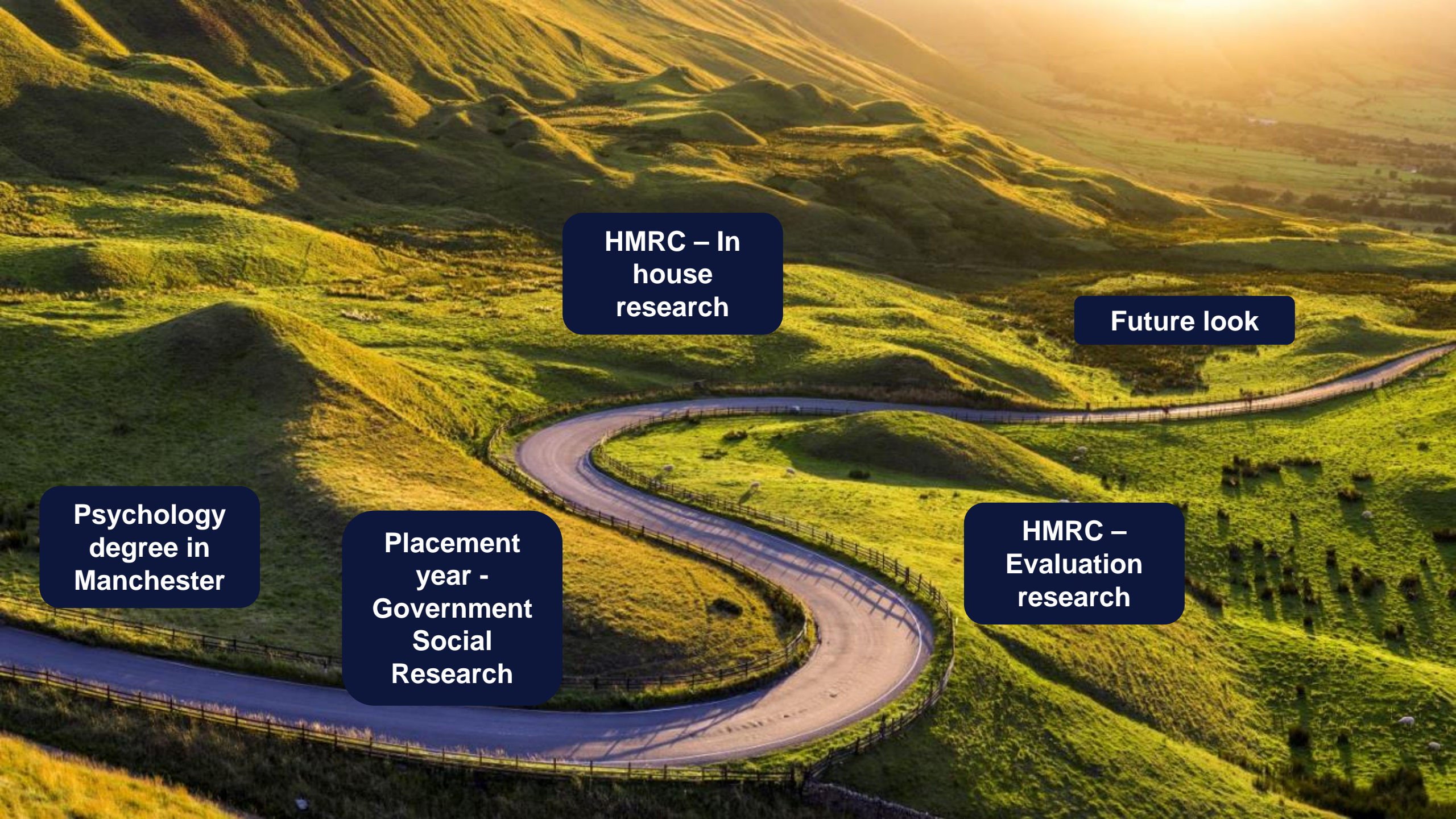


Shaping a fairer future

We are the UK's home for community research and social innovation

My advice

- Find your passion – what is it you want to know?
- Be open to different research methods – look beyond what you are taught
- Look for apprenticeships – short term placements can lead to longer roles
- Make the best of something negative
- Research can be a friendly inviting space!



**HMRC – In
house
research**

Future look

**Psychology
degree in
Manchester**

**Placement
year -
Government
Social
Research**

**HMRC –
Evaluation
research**

Social Research Association – North Event: Routes in Research

A social research perspective

Simon Maydew (Director) Verian (formerly known as Kantar
Public)

22nd November 2023



Reflections

- Purpose – ‘My Why’
- The Story
- What is on my desk?
- Routes and options
- A world full of possibilities



Purpose – 'My Why'

- ❑ “I believe in creating in better future, where everyone has a voice, can reach their potential and live a fulfilled life”
- ❑ Social research is a ‘tool’ to achieve the vision and purpose - ‘gift to the world’
- ❑ Amplifying voices, understanding people, making a difference

Verian – Powering decisions that shape the world

The Story – 30 Years

- ❑ Privileged never a job, always a hobby/passion
- ❑ Lancaster University - Geography
- ❑ Staffordshire County Council
- ❑ Staffordshire and Bedfordshire Training and Enterprise Councils
- ❑ BMG Research & Wolverhampton Homes
- ❑ MEL Research
- ❑ Verian (Formerly Kantar Public)



Verian: What Is On My Desk?

- ❑ Evidence to help shape and inform National Government Policy
- ❑ Department for Business and Trade: National Survey Registered Businesses
- ❑ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
 - Social residents survey, Longitudinal survey of Private Sector Rented Tenants, Mediation in the PRS, Local authority capacity/skills survey, Community Ownership Fund evaluation etc.

Routes and Options

- ❑ Rich and exciting range of possibilities
- ❑ Huge variety of research areas (health, communities, employee experience etc)
- ❑ Diversity of roles (behavioural, methods, data analytics, project management, operational, client services, business development)
- ❑ Range of possible employers (charities, universities, government, agency side)

Be curious, experiment, find your interest/passion, don't be afraid to fail

A world full of possibilities

- Client (e.g. civil service) or agency side (demand for skills)
- Large research agencies
- Strengths of smaller independent agencies
- Find your passion from a broad set of experiences
- Specialist or generalist
- Leading others

Dare to dream/dream big, have a plan, action trumps knowledge, take risks, invest in yourself, have high standards, work hard, prioritise your time on activities that matter/have impact, be kind, have fun!



A world full of possibilities

- ❑ “It is in your hands, to make a better world for all who live in it.”
- ❑ “There is no passion to be found playing small - in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living.” (Nelson Mandela)
- ❑ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbnzAVRZ9Xc>

Believe in yourself, go and make an impact and shape the world





Skye Curtis

Head of Evaluation

MEL Research

Tips and Advice

- Be open to always **learning** and trying new things
- Try **different sectors** and research areas
- Consider **what you like** about research
- **Reach out** to people in the sector - learn from them
- Don't be afraid to **change**, move or **try something new!**
- Value soft skills

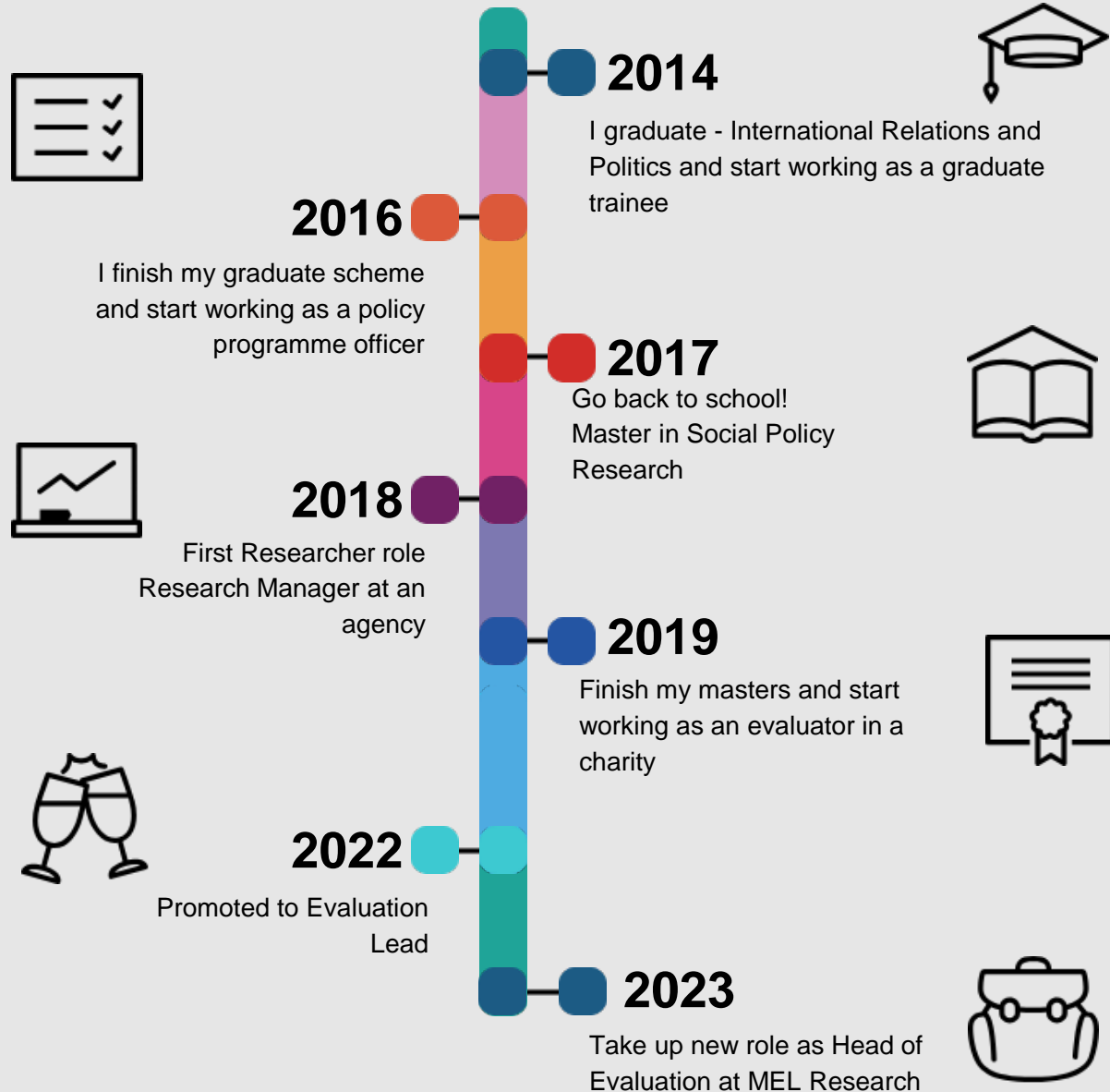


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skye-curtis-research123

Career Timeline





Peter Traynor

A MEANDERING CAREER IN RESEARCH:
SOME REFLECTIONS





THE PRESENT: 2023

Research Manager: Youth Futures Foundation

Managing Editor: Probation Journal, Sage publishing



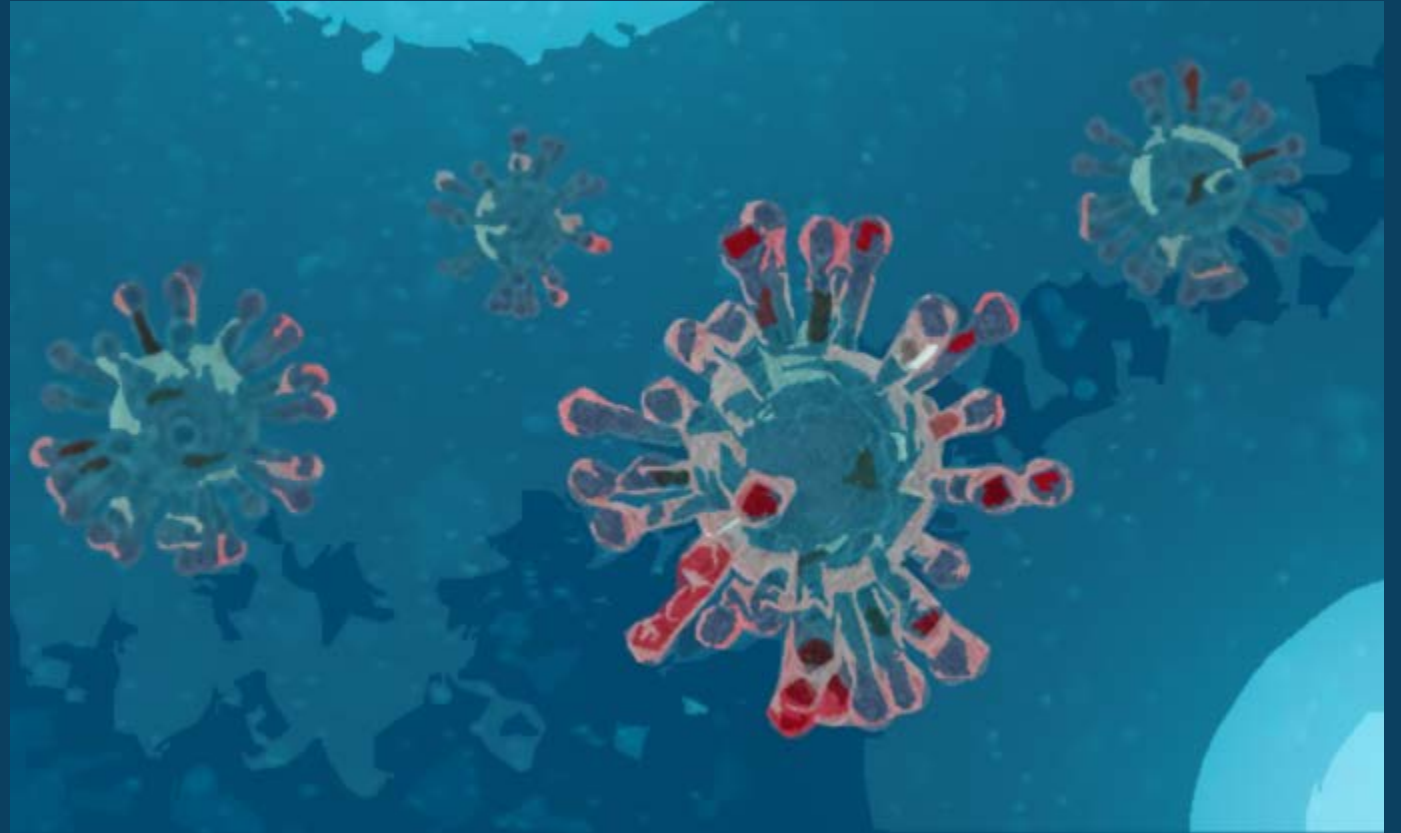
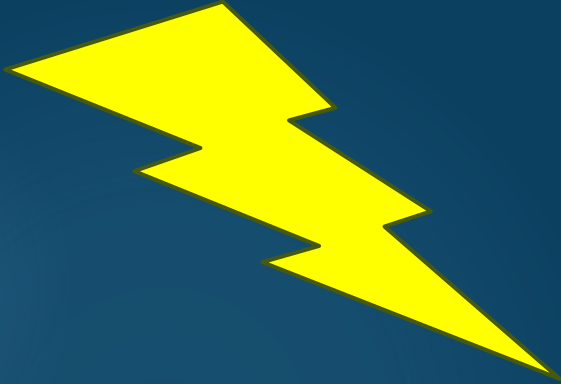
RESEARCH CAREER PT1: DRIFT

- 1997- 2001 BA, Sociology (2:1 upper), *Sheffield Hallam University*
- 2001 - 2003  Research Officer Consultant: *National Association of Pension Funds, London*
- 2004 - 2005 MA, Social Research Methods, Sociology, *University of Sheffield*
- 2004 - 2005 Research Associate: *Forum on Population Ageing Research, Sheffield Uni*
- 2005 - 2006 Research Officer: *Policy Research Institute on Ageing and Ethnicity, Leeds*
- 2006 - 2013  Researcher/Tutor: *School of Law, University of Leeds*
- 2011 - 2017  Criminal Justice Studies (ESRC), *School of Law, University of Leeds*
- 2014 - 2017  Research and Data Coordinator: *Organisational Development, Leeds University*
- 2017 - 2020 Senior Research Assistant: *Policy Evaluation and Research Unit, MMU*

2019



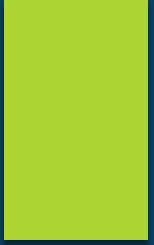
PANDEMIC: REDUNDANCY



2020



PANDEMIC: OPPORTUNITY



TUTORING/MENTORING

VOLUNTEERING

EDITING

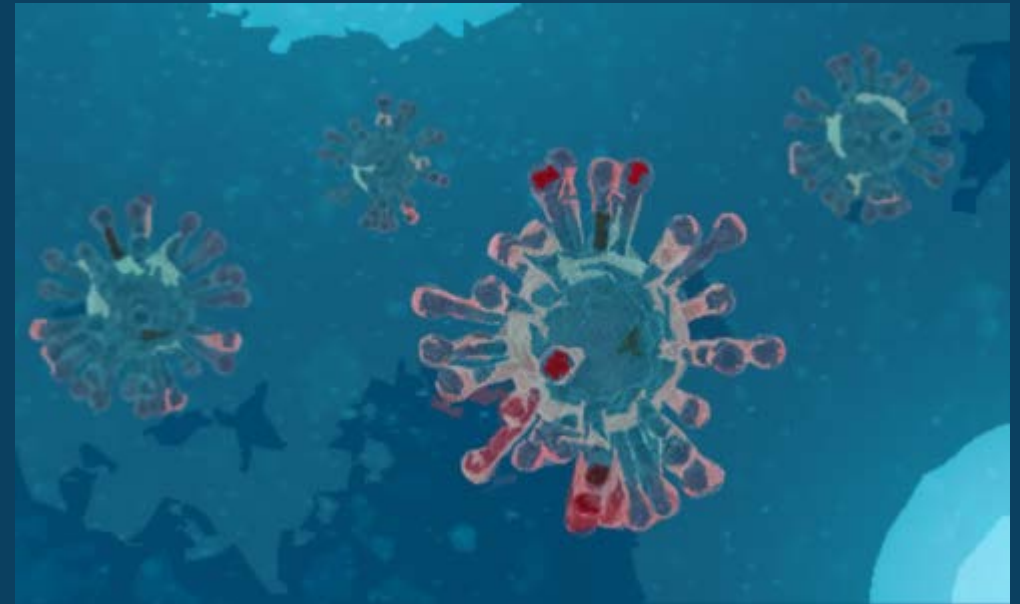
HOME-SCHOOLING

MINDFULNESS

COACHING

WRITING

REST AND FITNESS



2021



RESEARCH CAREER PT2: DIRECTION

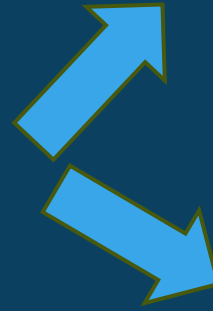


2021 Managing Editor: Probation Journal, Sage publishing

2021 - 2022 Research Associate: Faculty of Health, MMU

2022 Research Manager: Youth Futures Foundation

THE FUTURE?



REFLECTIONS

For early/mid career researchers

1. **You** are not your research career

- Think about long term direction
- Expect life to get in the way
- Understand and develop transferable skills
- Change is ok – if you're not happy - step out
- Try new things: volunteer (but only if be useful or fun)

REFLECTIONS

2. Prioritise **yourself**

- Think about long term direction
- Do your job, but think every day about **what's next**
- Learn to say **no** - be selfish
- Take care of your mental and physical health
- Plan for your future financial wellbeing

REFLECTIONS



3. Own **your** background

- Be proud of your education
- Think about your skillset
- Reflect on your background – can it shape your future?

REFLECTIONS

4. Academia is **not** for everyone

- Current model flawed
- Suits specific skill sets
- Can reduce autonomy and sense of alternatives
- Think **very carefully** before doing an MA/PhD
- Methods are constantly evolving

REFLECTIONS



5. Research career routes

- Academia/Academic adjacent
- Government research
- Local government
- Charitable/public sector
- 'What works'
- Private sector/UX/tech industry

REFLECTIONS



6. Moving forward

- Network
- Get visible
- Find what you're interested in
- Keep upgrading
- Keep your options open

THIS IS NOT A TED TALK

"I'm not telling you to make the world better, because I don't think that progress is necessarily part of the package. I'm just telling you to live in it. Not just to endure it, not just to suffer it, not just to pass through it, but to live in it. To look at it. To try to get the picture. To live recklessly. To take chances. To make your own work and take pride in it. To seize the moment. And if you ask me why you should bother to do that, I could tell you that the grave's a fine and private place, but none I think do there embrace. Nor do they sing there, or write, or argue, or see the tidal bore on the Amazon, or touch their children. And that's what there is to do and get it while you can and good luck at it."

Joan Didion.

THANKS FOR LISTENING

