

SPPIRIT

Scottish Parasitology Partnership in
Research, Innovation and Training

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SPPIRIT Network Newsletter

Issue 1, 27th April 2022

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SPPIRIT Launch Event

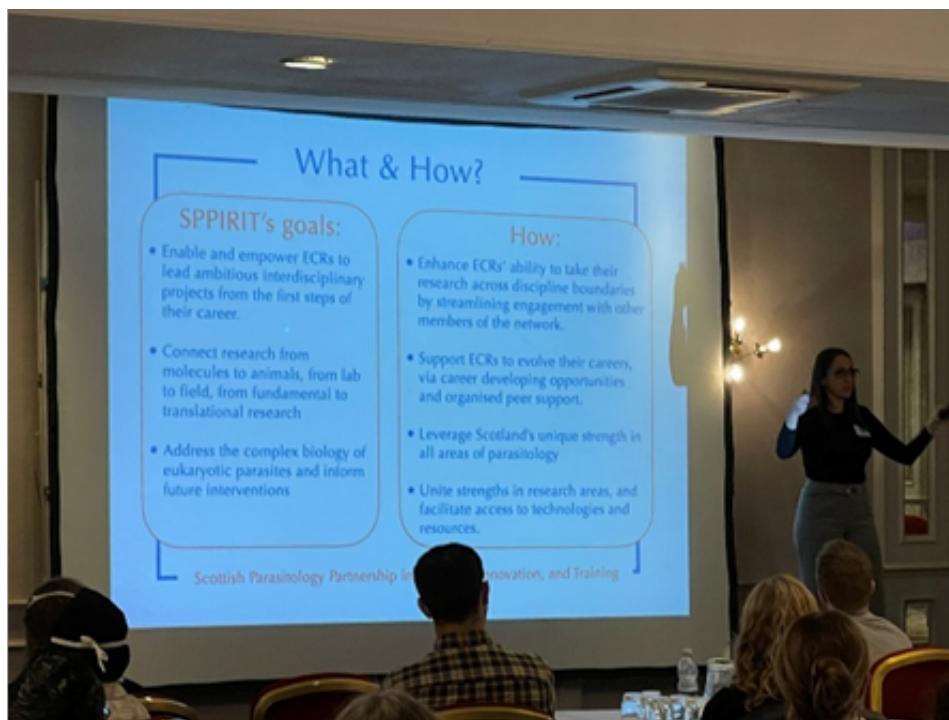
Wednesday 30th March 2022 saw the launch of the first SPPIRIT network event. The event took place at the Grosvenor Hotel in Glasgow and was attended by more than one hundred network members.

Responses in a survey given to SPPIRIT network members prior to the launch event indicated that Early Career Researchers (ECRs) across Scotland were particularly keen to receive information on a) fellowship applications, b) developing collaborations and c) public engagement. Therefore, the day's events were centred on those specific topics.

The day kicked off with an introduction to the network from Dr Lilach Sheiner (University of Glasgow, Wellcome Centre for Integrative Parasitology, WCIP), one of the network's lead committee members. This was followed by talks from the heads of departments from parasitology research institutes across Scotland, which gave an overview of their centre's or institute's key parasitology research aims and themes, their USP and their support for ECRs. SULSA (Scottish Universities Life Sciences Alliance) are keen to maintain connections with the SPPIRIT network and Dr Ally Hughes, Project Coordinator at SULSA followed up by giving a talk on how existing strategic alliance among Scottish universities can be harnessed to support ECRs through training and funding support.



The SPPIRIT Network launches to over 100 attendees



Dr Lilach Sheiner outlines the SPPIRIT network's goals

Before lunch, lead SPPIRIT committee member Prof Sarah Reece (University of Edinburgh) gave an overview of the process of applying for fellowships which included key considerations when putting a fellowship application together and valuable advice on what to do and not to do in your application. After lunch, attendees disseminated into breakout groups for panel discussions led by researchers familiar with fellowship application processes. Here, attendees were able to ask specific questions to the panel members and learn from their experiences.

Fellowship sessions were followed up by tandem sessions on either developing collaborations or public engagement. For the "Developing Collaborations" session, attendees were asked to bring along an example of an email they would send to an

attendees were asked to bring along an example of an email they would send to an individual to strike up a collaboration. During the session, attendees used these examples as a basis to discuss how to approach potential collaborators and what to look for in a good collaborator. The “Public Engagement” session was led by PE managers Ali Floyd (University of Dundee, Wellcome Centre for Anti-Infectives Research, WCAIR) and Hannah Bialic (University of Glasgow, WCIP) and Director of Communications Prof Lee Innes (Moredun Research Institute). The PE experts provided an overview of the diverse ways in which research can be communicated to different audiences and how this is a two-way street that benefits both the researcher and their target audience. Attendees were then tasked with coming up their own public engagement events in small groups and fed their ideas back to the room.

Lead committee member Dr Mattie Pawlowic (University of Dundee, WCAIR) rounded off the day’s events with closing remarks and an audience survey. The results indicated that the launch day’s activities were a great success, with respondents feeling more comfortable in approaching grant writing, new collaborators or a PE event, and now know where to seek out further information and guidance.

All presentation material from the day will be posted to the SPPIRIT Network Slack channel (see below under “What’s Next?” for details on SPPIRIT Slack).



We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all of those who participated and contributed to making the SPPIRIT launch event such a successful one, we look forward to seeing all of you at future events!

We would also like to thank our sponsors for funding the event: **The Moredun Research Institute, The Roslin Institute, University of Dundee WCAIR, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow WCIP, BBSRC, SULSA, Wellcome Trust.**

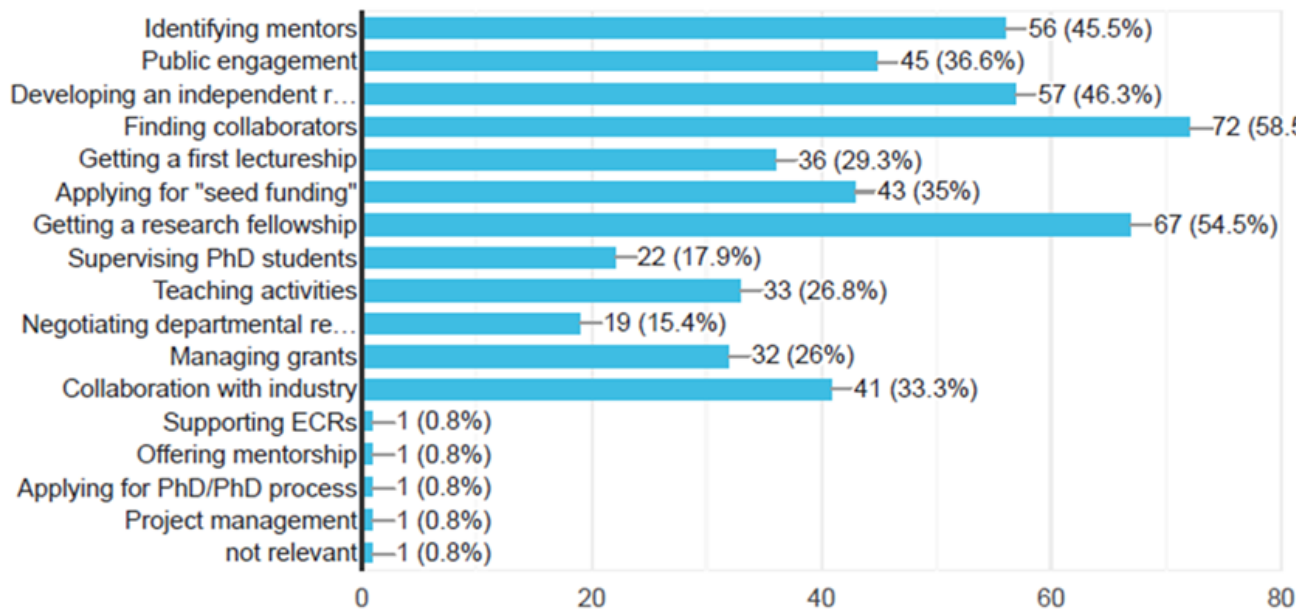
How we are using your survey responses to inform SPPIRIT activities

Three surveys have gone out to SPPIRIT network members so far. One survey was within the registration form when new network members signed up. This survey aimed to find out where parasitology ECRs were based, their areas of research interest, career stage and what they would want from the network. In asking what you wanted from the network, among the top hits were information on a) fellowship applications, b) building collaborations and c) public engagement and we used this information when organising the activities at the launch day event, which were centred on these three areas.

Which topics would you most like to discuss at the event? You can select more than

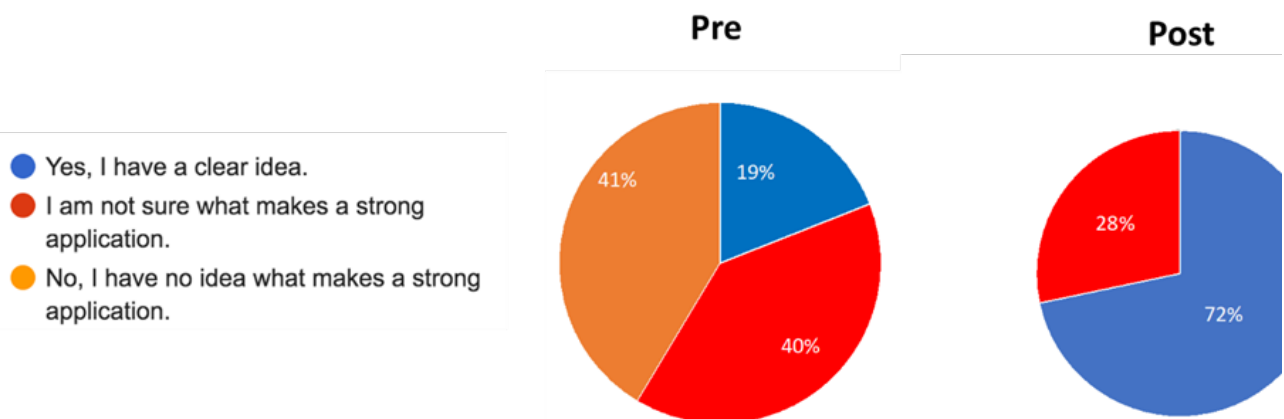
one, and make suggestions using the "other" option

123 responses



We also held surveys with attendees pre- and post-activities at the launch day event. As well as gaining more information on what you wanted from your ECR parasitology network, these surveys also aimed to gauge how much understanding attendees felt they already had in fellowship applications, public engagement, etc, prior to the event and then again after the event. Full launch day survey data is available on the SPPIRIT network Slack channel (see below under "What's Next?" for details on SPPIRIT Slack).

Do you know what characteristics make a strong fellowship application?



You also made it clear in your survey responses that you would like a framework for external mentorship and we want you to know that this is something we are now working to establish.

The network will continue to gain information and feedback from members in future and we want to be clear with all members that this information is being used to shape

and we want to be clear with all members that the information is being used to shape a network that benefits you. Thank you for your cooperation.

Changes to the SPIRRIT organising committee



After taking a leading role as the chairperson of the SPPIRIT network's organising committee since its launch, Dr Juan Quintana (University of Glasgow) is stepping down from their position on the committee. We are sincerely grateful to Dr Quintana for their efforts in bringing committee members together and for their key role in organising the committee and the launch event. We wish you all the very best in your bright research career and look forward to seeing you at future events, Juan.

Current SPPIRIT committee members:

- Dr Mattie Pawlowic (University of Dundee)
- Prof Sarah Reece (University of Edinburgh)
- Dr Lilach Sheiner (University of Glasgow)
- Dr Emma Briggs (University of Edinburgh)
- Dr Roz Laing (University of Glasgow)
- Dr Andrew MacLean (University of Glasgow)
- Dr Melanie Ridgway (University of Dundee)
- Dr Matthew Sinton (University of Glasgow)
- Dr David Smith (Moredun Research Institute)
- Dr Richard Wall (University of Dundee)

What's Next?

1. The next event hosted through the SPPIRIT network will be a **research symposium for ECRs**. Come along ready to showcase your research and look to strike up strategic collaborations with other parasitology researchers throughout Scotland's. Further details to follow on when and where this event will take place.
2. **SPPIRIT SLACK** – join the SPPIRIT Network's Slack channel using this link https://join.slack.com/t/sppirit/shared_invite/zt-17jql12lw-CpbvarsMFYEXA0s3I50vog as an easy way to keep up with network activities, links to useful information and to keep in touch with parasitology ECRs across Scotland.
3. **Your network needs you!** Want to volunteer for a role within the network? Places on the SPPIRIT organising committee and targeted sub-committees will gradually become available as current members decide to step down from

their roles. Keep an eye out for openings if you would like to take up the opportunity to join the cooperative team. As well as the central coordinating committee, sub-committees will include “Events committee”, “Website Management committee”, “Communications and social media committee”, “Career Development committee”. **This will be your opportunity to show leadership and teamwork (important for your CV!) and to gain exposure among your peers.** To express your interest in taking up a role within the SPPIRIT network, you can check out the volunteering workspace on the SPPIRIT Slack channel, email sppirit.network@gmail.com, or send a direct message to the [@SPPIRITNetwork](https://twitter.com/SPPIRITNetwork) Twitter account.

4. **We need a website!** Consider yourself an effective website designer? If you are and you'd be interested in getting involved in the network, we'd love to hear from you! Don't hesitate to get in touch via any of the current committee members (see below), or you can message us on Twitter ([@SPPIRITNetwork](https://twitter.com/SPPIRITNetwork)), email sppirit.network@gmail.com or let us know over on the SPPIRIT Slack.

5. **We need a logo!** The SPPIRIT network is lacking an eye-catching logo but we would really like one. So if you think you can design a logo that embodies SPPIRIT then please submit your entry to us! You can email entries to sppirit.network@gmail.com.

Advertised 3-year Postdoc Position

Postdoctoral Research Scientist - Parasite Vaccines (Temporary until end of June 2025)

*The Moredun Group is recruiting a highly motivated postdoctoral scientist to join our Vaccines and Diagnostics Department at the world-leading Moredun Research Institute. The successful candidate will join a multi-disciplinary, industry-sponsored, team to **develop a prototype recombinant vaccine against the poultry red mite, *Dermanyssus gallinae***. The approach will involve a **reverse vaccinology** pipeline for *in silico* antigen selection, gene silencing by reverse genetics and recombinant vaccine expression with *in vivo* testing.*

Applications can be made via the following link:

[Postdoctoral Research Scientist - Parasite Vaccines \(Temporary until end of June 2025\) at Moredun Research Institute \(jobs.ac.uk\)](#)