Inaugural Meeting

University Place, Manchester

Tuesday 16th – Wednesday 17th September 2025

The UKSCN meeting is providing a great opportunity for early career scientists and others to benefit from contact with experts in the field of regenerative medicine. Those who have indicated an interest in participating in the 'Meet the Experts Breakfast' will be directly contacted now that our Experts have been confirmed.

The breakfast meeting is designed to help initiate contacts and help UKSCN delegates to gain valuable insights into areas they want to become more familiar with. There will be two twenty-minute sessions so that you can join **two** expert tables. Here we introduce our **NINE** experts with long standing expertise in different aspects of stem cell research and professional development to take part in this session.

Meet the Experts Early Career and Technical Researchers Breakfast

September 17th, 2025, 8.00am - 8.50 am
Classroom 1.219 (University Place Level 1)

Table 1 - Effective publication

Dr Anna Melidoni
Senior Editor,
BMC Biology, Springer Nature

Anna is a Senior Editor with BMC Biology, one of the selective journals of BMC, the first open-access publishing company and part of Springer Nature. She primarily handles Cell, Molecular, and Developmental Biology articles and she has a particular interest in Stem Cell Biology in relation to early embryology, tissue repair and Regenerative Medicine. Her work as an Editor involves making assessments of submitted articles pre peer-review, inviting suitable reviewers and making editorial decisions based on the reviewers' reports and the opinion of external editorial advisors. She also attends conferences connecting with researchers, commissions reviews articles and organizes thematic article Collections on important topics. Anna joined Springer Nature after being a Postdoctoral researcher for a few years, both in Greece, (University of Ioannina) and in the UK (University of Cambridge) working on various projects within the broad field of cell surface signalling and stem cell differentiation. While still a researcher, she was also a freelance consultant for PLOS Biology on stem cell-related articles. She holds a PhD in Molecular Biology from Queen Mary, University of London, UK and a BSc in Biology from the University of Crete, Greece. Anna will answer your questions on how to maximise the impact of your work through effective publication.

Table 2 - Academia to Industry -Points to Consider

Dr Meg Byrne
Independent Consultant

Meg is an independent Cell Line Development and Platform Operations Consultant and a leading expert in pluripotent stem cell engineering, specializing in CRISPR-based genome editing and scalable therapeutic cell line development. After beginning her career at NIBSC (MHRA), she spent over 12 years in academia at UCL, University of Bristol, and the Wellcome Sanger Institute, before transitioning into industry at bit.bio. There, she led the establishment and operation of their research-grade opti-ox™ cell line engineering pipeline, later building a regulatory-aligned therapeutic pluripotent stem cell development platform. Meg excels at translating academic protocols into robust, automated, and scalable systems, implementing phase-appropriate analytics and process controls to deliver regulatory-aligned engineered seed banks.

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Table 3 - Early career researchers - making your own path

Dr James Henstock
Associate Professor in Bioengineering
Northumbria University

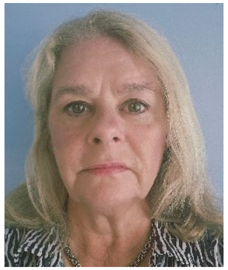
James is currently Associate Professor of Bioengineering at Northumbria University in Newcastle and is an advocate for empowering early career researchers to take control over their career journey. As a postdoc at Keele in 2014 he decided to write a '5-year plan' for his career, which led to working in New York, a tenure-track fellowship at Liverpool University, and sending muscle organoids to the International Space Station. After being appointed to lecturer, he took time out to work in industry at a cultivated meat start up in Sydney, Australia. James is on BBSRC's People & Talent Strategy Advisory Panel, is a bioscience consultant for the European Space Agency, and a member of the REF 2029 pilot for People, Culture and Environment. This table will be about the practical steps you can take to plan your own unique career journey.

Table 4 - Writing successful grant applications

Professor Sue Kimber
Professor of Stem Cells and Development
University of Manchester,

Sue is past Director of the MRC/EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Regenerative Medicine and was Co-Director of the Northwest Embryonic Stem Cell Centre (NWESCC). She has over 30 years' experience in cell and developmental biology and 16 years' experience in stem cells, regenerative medicine, disease modelling and tissue engineering with >170 publications. Her lab has derived more than 50 human induced pluripotent stem cell (hiPSC) lines both from healthy individuals and those with disease conditions caused by mutations affecting the skeleton, kidney, nervous system and vasculature. They have developed and applied different 2D and 3D protocols to human embryonic stem cell and hiPSC, differentiating them to a range of tissues for understanding human development and for modelling genetic, often rare, diseases with a view to finding new drug targets. She has participated in two UKRI UK Regenerative Medicine Platform hubs ('Stem Cell Niche' and 'Safety of Stem Cells') and has supervised over 60 PhD students, as well as post docs and fellows. She has held over 100 research grants of various kinds during her career. In 2019 she was awarded a Suffrage Science Award for her tissue engineering research by the Royal Society. Relevant external activities include Co-Chair of 2023 meeting of European chapter of TERMIS; Founder and Co-Chair of Mercia Stem Cell Alliance to promote stem cell biology in the Northwest and Midlands and member of several UKRI and research charity and European grant funding committees. Sue will share a wealth of knowledge and tips on do's and don'ts when applying for grants.

Table 5 - Regulatory aspects in Biotech



Dr Alison Wilson
Principal Consultant,
Cell Data Services

Alison is an independent regulatory affairs consultant specialising in advanced therapy medicinal products. She has over 30 years' experience of regulatory affairs in industry with medicinal products, medical devices and ATMPs. Specialising in early-stage advice for academic groups and small spin-outs, she has extensive experience with development of hESC–derived therapies for hearing loss and glaucoma, MSC for central nervous system and orthopaedic applications, dendritic cells in oncology immunotherapy, novel drug-device combinations and pro-drug delivery in oncology.

She has been closely involved with the UK regenerative medicine community via the British Standards Institute (BSI) and the UK Regenerative Medicine platform (UK-RMP-2). Previous industry roles include Scientific Advisory Board member and Safety and Immunology Panel co-Chair for UK-RMP-2 Acellular Smart Materials Hub, Member of BSI Technical Committee BTI/001 – Biotechnologies, and Module Advisor for TOPRA (The Organisation for Professionals in Regulatory Affairs) MSc Modules in Biotechnology and Combination Products.

Alison has an MSc in stem cell biology and a PhD covering standardisation of cells for regenerative medicine and is a Fellow of TOPRA.

Table 6 - Research Technical Professionals career opportunities and pathways

Dr Ralph Adams
UK ITSS and University of Manchester

Ralph is Head of the NMR service in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Manchester. He is a national leader in Technical Facility Operation: a former member of the EPSRC Research Technical Professionals Working Group and a founding and committee member of the UK Technology Specialists Network. He has consulted on issues of facility management, cost recovery and industry engagement, delivered numerous workshops at international meetings, summer schools, and in-house, and, as head of the NMR facility, has been responsible for securing >£10M capital for research equipment training many hundreds of research students. He is an expert in the development and application of NMR methodology and techniques. Ralph is secretary of the Royal Society of Chemistry's NMR Discussion Group and has contributed extensively to the organisation of national and international conferences. His research has had a significant influence on the ways in which solution state NMR is used in a broad range of fields, and he engages widely with the chemical, scientific instrument and pharmaceutical industries; his software has been downloaded >2000 times p.a. in each of the last 6 years and is included as standard in manufacturers' libraries.

Table 7 - Translation and manufacturing of commercially viable products

Dr Matthew Smart
Lead Scientist
Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult

Matthew has been working in the pluripotent stem cell field for over 15 years. He gained his PhD at The Institute of Ophthalmology, University College London, as part of the London Project to Cure Blindness group, which developed a hESC-RPE-based cell therapy for AMD that showed great promise in FiH clinical trials. As a Lead Scientist at Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult, Matthew is active across all aspects of cell therapy translation, with specific expertise in pluripotent stem cell therapies. The SET team aims to develop next-generation manufacturing strategies for cell and gene therapy production, while helping to foster an environment that can best support developers as they move towards the clinic and beyond.

Table 8 - Protect, patent & partner: Mastering IP strategy for cell therapy

Dr Rose Hughes
European Patent Attorney for Evolve Intellectual Property Limited

Driven by a passion for science, Rose specialises in pharmaceutical and biotech patent strategy, combining scientific knowledge with practical IP solutions. She believes that IP strategy needs to be as innovative and forward-thinking as the science it seeks to protect. Her enthusiasm for the science shapes her approach to developing IP strategies that protect advanced therapeutics whilst creating competitive advantages for products and platforms. Rose has guided IP portfolios through every phase of development, from early discovery to on-market protection.

Table 9 - Latest standards in stem cell research and biotech

Prof Glyn Stacey
Director for the International Biobanking Initiative and SSCBio,

Glyn has an academic and applied background in microbiology and cancer research and until 2017 worked as a cell therapy specialist at the UK regulatory body (MHRA). From 2003, he was the founding Director for the UK Stem Cell Bank for human embryonic stem cells. Glyn's work has covered safety and quality issues in cell therapy, cells used for manufacturing purposes, development of novel cell-based assays genetic reference materials. Over more than 30 years, Glyn has also maintained a strong interest in improvement of cryopreservation methods and biobanking of various biological materials. He has been the Chair for the Society for Low Temperature Biology (www.sltb.info) and a member of drafting groups for guidance and standards on cell preservation. Glyn has also been a PI for several UK and EC funded stem cell research consortia and was a leading PI for the European iPSC bank project, EBiSC, for which he remains an expert advisor. He is an advisor for numerous UK, EU and Asian research institutes, and has been a special advisor on cell substrates to the WHO. He is also currently an expert advisor for stem cell institutes of the Chinese Academy of Sciences   Glyn is also the founding director for International Stem Cell Banking Initiative (www.iscbi.org) focusing on the application of hPSCs, with members in 28 countries.

Facilitator

Dr Lyn Healy
Independent

Lyn has worked in stem cell biology for over 40 years. She obtained her PhD at the Institute of Cancer Research, University of London where she worked for 18 years on haematopoietic stem cells and leukaemia. Following that, Lyn joined the UK Stem Cell Bank at the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control, part of the MHRA in 2003, working on Standardisation and Best Practice in the area of banking human Pluripotent Stem Cells and quality control. In 2015 Lyn joined the Francis Crick Institute and after working in the Haematopoietic Stem Cell Laboratory for a year she moved into the Human Embryo and Stem Cell Unit at the Francis Crick Institute, delivering services to the Crick scientific community until she left in February 2025.

Her experience includes participating in large infrastructure projects delivering quality control advice, cell lines and protocols. She is a member of the International Cell Line Authentication Committee, The International Society for Stem Cell Research, The International Society for Cell Therapy and is a member of the national committee for the ISO Technical Committee 276, sitting as an expert. Lyn is also a working group lead for the COST Action CorEUStem, The European Network for Stem Cell Core Facilities.