



# Diversity and Inclusivity in Science

Dr Anna Slater

5<sup>th</sup> July 2019



UNIVERSITY OF  
LIVERPOOL

**EPSRC**

Engineering and Physical Sciences  
Research Council

THE  
ROYAL  
SOCIETY



**Beyond the Molecule**  
The EPSRC Directed Assembly Network



**Dial-a-Molecule**  
An EPSRC Grand Challenge Network



I am planning to cover



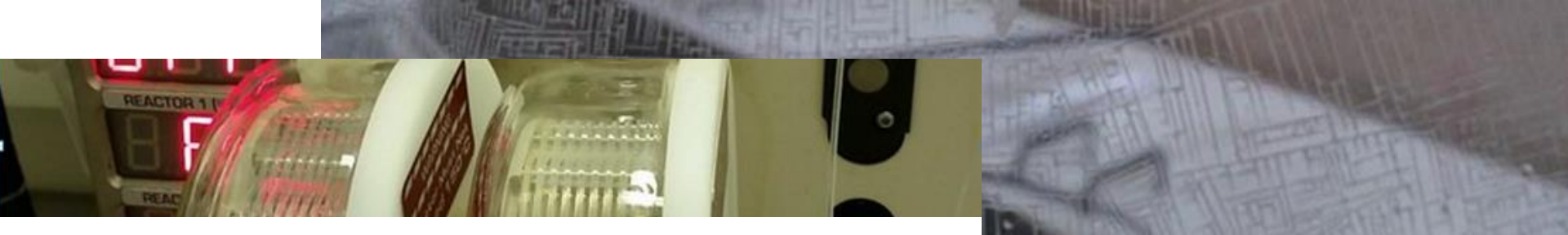
**'Experiences of researchers taking maternity, paternity, adoption and/or parental leave'**

**Dr Anna Slater, University of Liverpool and UKRSA**

**#Vitae17**



Two panels by KC Green,  
<http://gunshowcomic.com/648>



A few caveats and a bit of context

# YMMV

Your mileage  
may vary

Used to tell  
someone that  
advice may not  
give them  
the same results  
as it gave  
someone else



I AM NOT AN  
EXPERT  
BUT I HAVE WATCHED  
A NUMBER OF  
ONLINE TUTORIALS

*What do we want*  
EVIDENCE  
BASED  
POLICY  
*When do we want it*  
AFTER  
PEER  
REVIEW



# Experience of researchers taking maternity, paternity, adoption, and/or parental leave

**Anna Slater, Katie Wheat, Rebekah Willson**

**Supporting Synthesis & Self Assembly, York 2019**

# Who, what, why

UK Research Staff Association



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'Experiences of researchers taking maternity, paternity, adoption and/or parental leave'

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#Vitae17



UNITED KINGDOM • CHINA • MALAYSIA



UK Research Staff Association



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PDRA 2010-2013

PDRA 2013-2016

Outgoing co-chair, UKRSA



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# Goal

UK Research Staff Association



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**Design a resource for  
researchers taking  
maternity/paternity/adoption/  
parental leave.**



<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/jul/01/pregnant-in-the-field-blog-photography-have-trowel-will-travel>

[https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2017/may/05/no-one-told-me-about-the-hidden-costs-of-maternity-leave?CMP=fb\\_gu](https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2017/may/05/no-one-told-me-about-the-hidden-costs-of-maternity-leave?CMP=fb_gu)

“First-ever national survey of postdocs who are parents reveals a lack of access to paid parental leave, pressures to return to work early and extra stressors for parents of colour.”

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/06/22/survey-parent-postdocs-reveals-lack-access-paid-parental-leave-pressure-return-work>

# Background & related research

UK Research Staff Association



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Student pregnancy & maternity: Implications for HEIs (ECU)

<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/external/student-pregnancy-and-maternity-implications-for-heis.pdf>

Quality in Academia & Life (GEW, UCU, SULF)

[https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/7570/Quality-in-academia-and-life-A-joint-strategy-to-improve-work-life-balance-by-GEW-UCU-and-SULF/pdf/worklifebalance\\_final.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/7570/Quality-in-academia-and-life-A-joint-strategy-to-improve-work-life-balance-by-GEW-UCU-and-SULF/pdf/worklifebalance_final.pdf)

Parents in the Pipeline: Retaining Postdoctoral Researchers with Families (The Centre for WorkLife Law, UC Hastings & NPA)

<http://www.thepregnantscholar.org/Parents-In-the-Pipeline>

A postdoc's guide to pregnancy & maternity leave (NPA)

<http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/?page=maternityleave>



# Who, how

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Researchers taking leave



Institutions and departments

Key questions: what do researchers want to know?  
what barriers do researchers experience?  
what best practice exists?

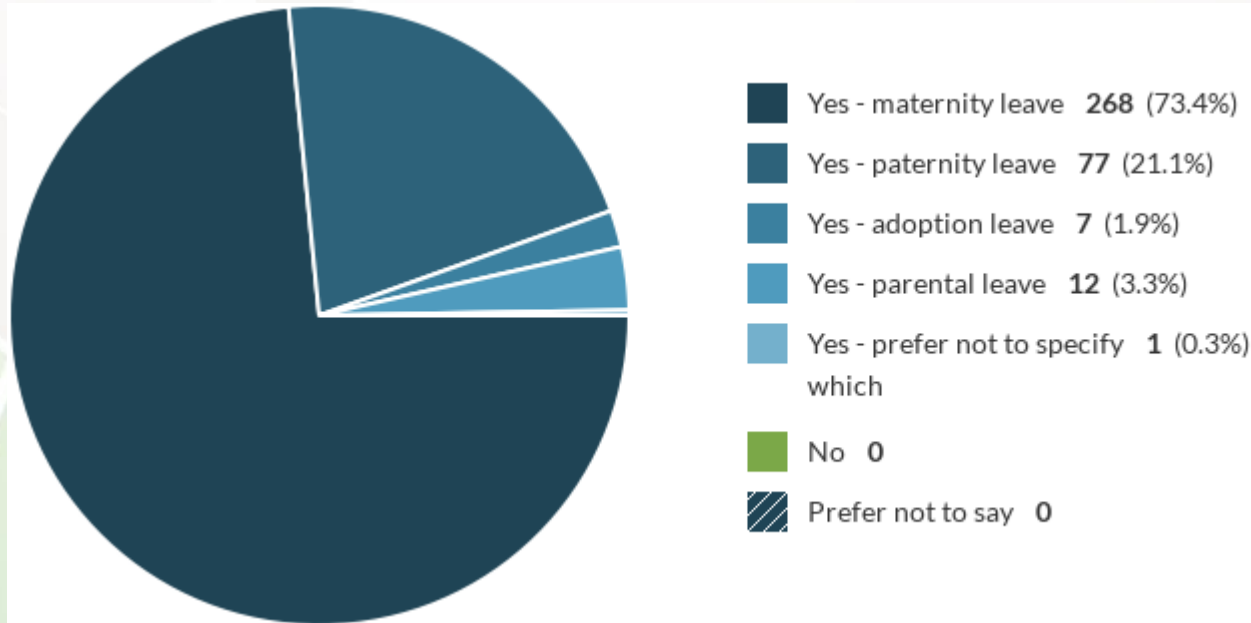
# Methodology

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Ethical approval through the UoL Ethics Panel  
Online pathfinder survey open from 26/10/16 – 31/03/17  
20 questions  
362 responses from people based in UK HE Institutions



# Demographics

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55.7 % Academic – researcher

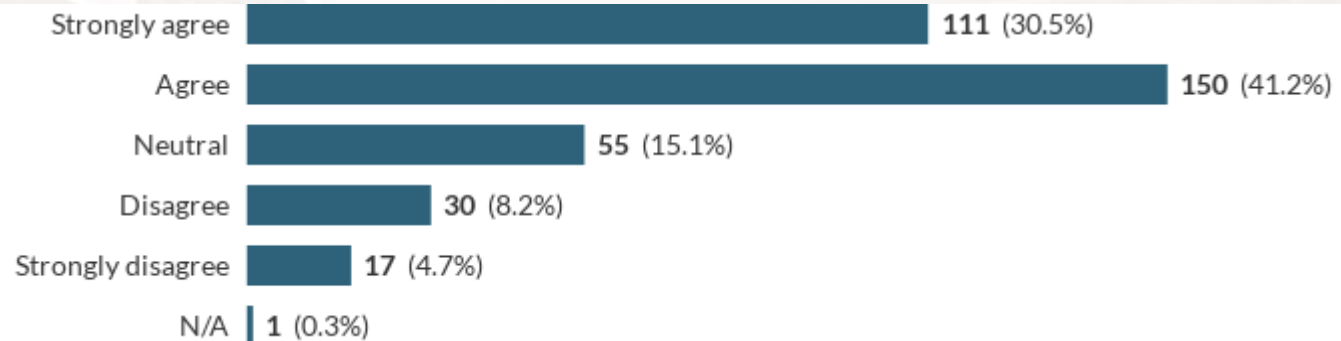
21.9 % Academic – lecturer/senior lecturer

47.9% Fixed term contract

35.9% Permanent contract

13.2% Permanent with insecure funding

“My experience of taking leave was overall positive”



# Barriers

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"I will be supported by the institution but I feel I would be left behind in my research."

"I feel like taking one maternity leave was enough from my boss."

"work that I had been completing prior to being away being discussed and given away for completion by colleagues without discussion"

"My contract ended one month after my daughter was due / born and so even though I had maternity leave in terms of finance (which was great!) - there was no job security."

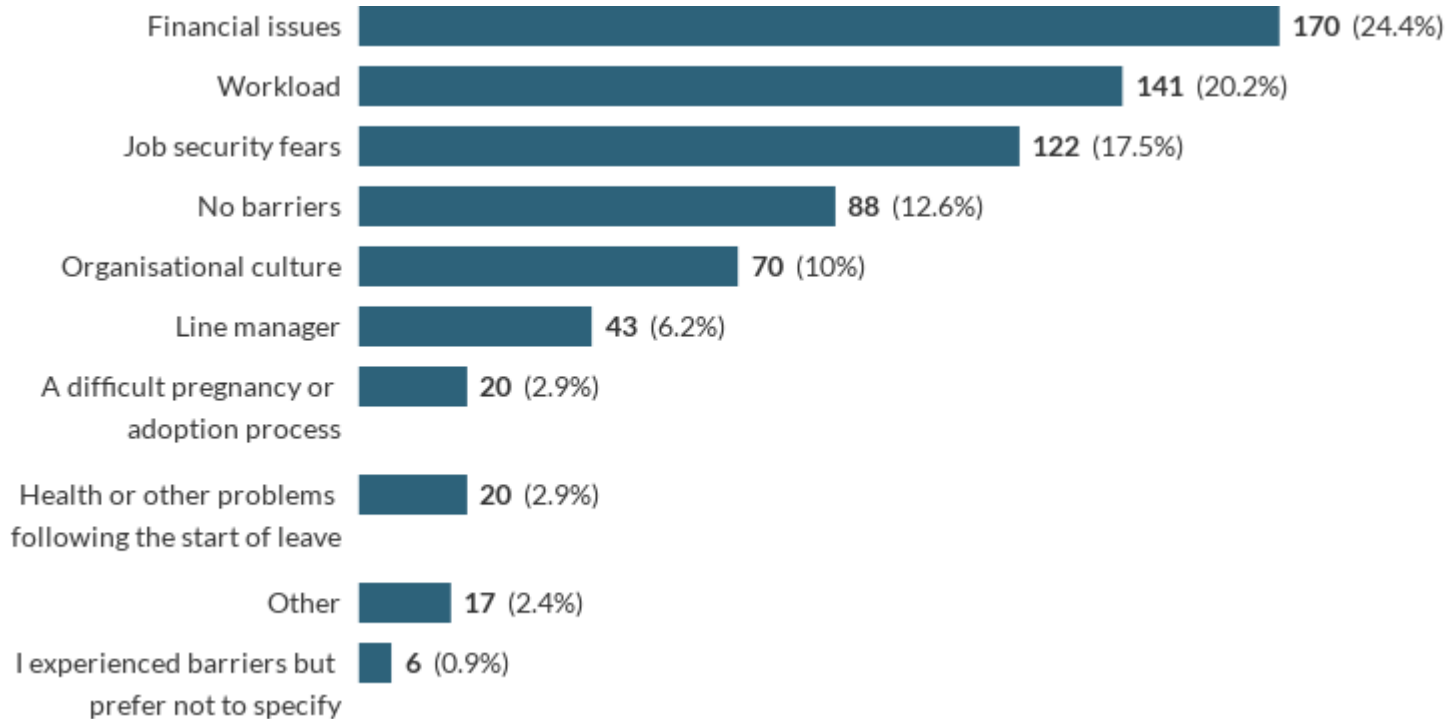
"Do you feel you would be supported to take leave if you needed to in the future?"





# Barriers

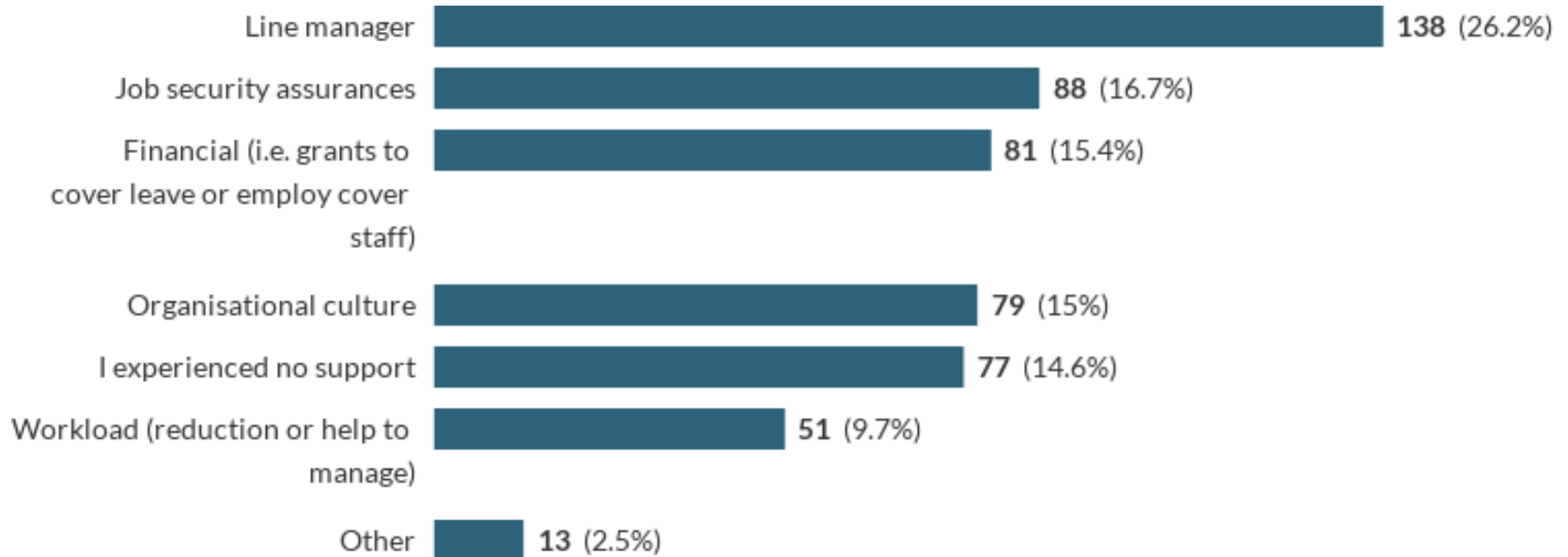
“Did you experience any of the following as barriers to taking this type of leave?”



Themes: **uncertainty** of contract/employment; **financial** issues; reaction from **line manager**/colleagues; **progression** of own research/career; **communication**

# Enablers

“Did you experience any of the following as enablers to taking this type of leave?”



# Enablers

UK Research Staff Association



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“I knew there was a precedent (colleagues had taken successfully leave before) ”

“I partake in Salary Sacrifice to fund our daycare through the university - this represents an incredible savings and was easy to set up.”

“I really appreciated a one-to-one appointment with an HR advisor before going on leave. It wasn't just offered but simply organised for me, and it made me feel supported.”

“My Head of School was extremely supportive and listed all the different kinds of help I could ask for without me asking.”

# Advice from researchers to researchers

UK Research Staff Association



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“Every person's situation is different. There are lots of positive stories to draw from, try to establish the support network early and be thankful to those that help you!”

“Ask for what (you) would like as early as possible”

“You can start accumulating childcare vouchers from birth onwards.”

“Take it if you can- it goes so quickly but gives you a unique opportunity to spend with your newborn.”

“You are entitled to accrue holiday at the same rate as any other staff member on your grade.”

“Find childcare as soon as possible – before the child is born!”

“Life is short, research will always be there, don't wait for the best time to have kids as there isn't one.”

“It gets easier. Your time management skills improve 100%, you learn to prioritise much better and you learn what to expend energy worrying about and what not.”



# Next Steps

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Thematic text analysis: Dr Rebekah Willson and Dr Katie Wheat

Initial results published, with three planned publications:

- Advice for researchers, from researchers
- Best practice policies for institutions to consider
- In-depth look at the survey results

Website?

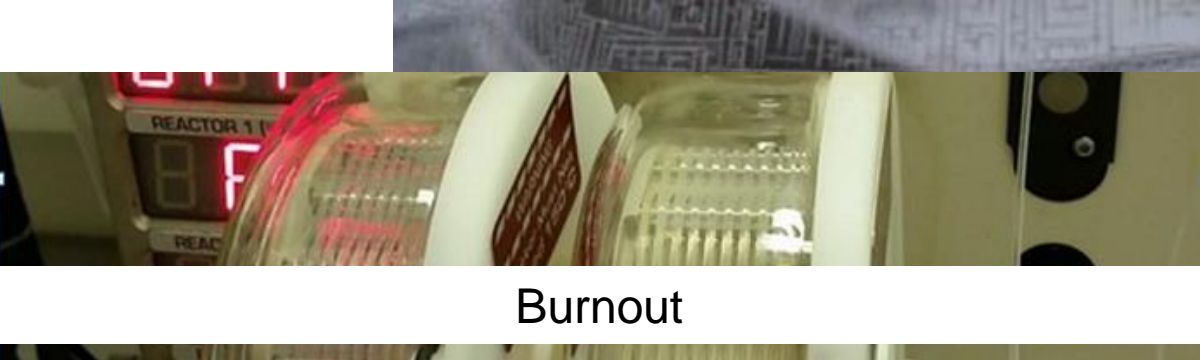
Please feedback & make suggestions!

# Contact details

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- Katie Wheat [Katie.Wheat@vitae.ac.uk](mailto:Katie.Wheat@vitae.ac.uk)
- UKRSA Committee [ukrsavitae@gmail.com](mailto:ukrsavitae@gmail.com)

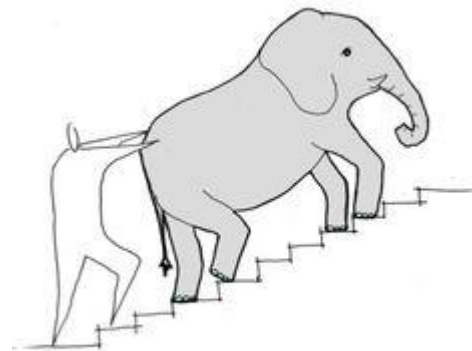
# Acknowledgements

- Survey respondents – thank you
- UKRSA Committee
- ECU, Royal Society, University of Liverpool



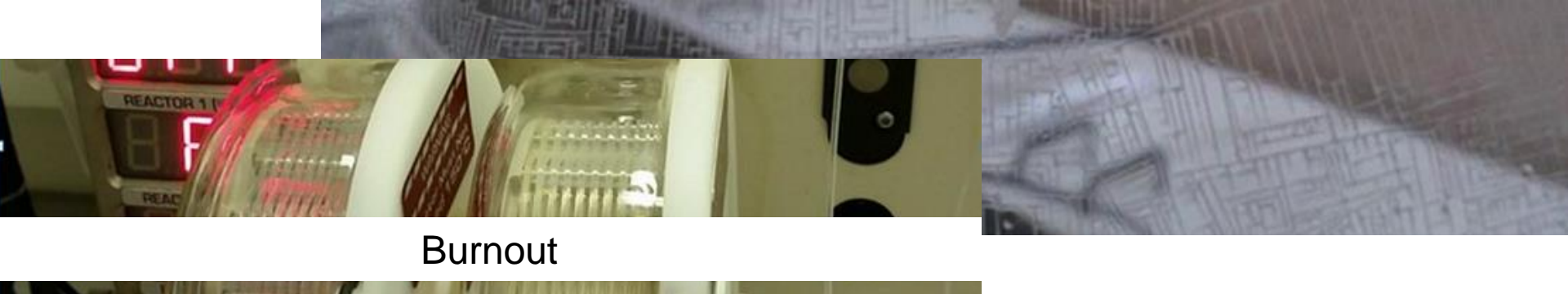
Burnout

Telling researchers to detect/avoid burnout without acknowledging the sometimes highly problematic working environments and context they are in is *not enough*.



InformedHealth.org [Internet]. Cologne, Germany: Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care (IQWiG); 2006-. Depression: What is burnout? 2012 Dec 5 [Updated 2017 Jan 12]. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK279286/>





Burnout

Dr Raul Pacheco-Vega <http://www.raulpacheco.org/resources/surviving-and-thriving-in-academia/>

“I promote empathy and kindness and community building.”

The idea of working towards a **culture of empathy**

Dr Shakir Mohamed (Google DeepMind) speaking at the LSTM Equity in Science conference on *Racialised Lives and the Life Beyond*

<http://blog.shakirm.com/2019/06/racialised-lives-and-the-life-beyond/>

The whole conference can be viewed here: [bit.ly/LSTM-EiS](http://bit.ly/LSTM-EiS)



## Acknowledgements

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