



PRESS RELEASE

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ROLE MODEL SCHEME WILL HELP OPEN NEW CAREER OPTIONS FOR WOMEN

Female scientists in the north east are encouraging a new generation to follow them into careers in science and technology thanks to a role model and mentoring scheme established through Newcastle Science City.

Research by Professor Pooran Wynarczyk of Newcastle University's Small Enterprise Research Unit has shown that women in traditionally male-dominated careers, such as science and technology, still face major barriers to success and are under-represented in the north east.

The result is the establishment of the North East of England Role Model Platform for Innovative Women thanks to a grant of £50,000 from the Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC), which first funded Professor Wynarczyk's Science in Society study.

The importance of identifying and developing role models fits perfectly under the banner of Newcastle Science City, which has both education and job creation as aims of its strategy to develop the already world-leading science in the region.

The platform is focusing on promoting scientific activities and discoveries amongst women and girls to aid their entry into scientific careers or progress further in their current roles.

It will also address the current lack of awareness of innovation initiatives, bodies, funds and bursaries which also stand in the way of significant progression.



Identifying local women role models to act as mentors and coaches is only part of the platform however, as Pooran Wynarczyk explains: “As the project progresses we will be creating a web-based directory of local female role models and then using that to

develop their role as mentors and coaches through workshops which will address some of the main barriers women currently experience. These may be confidence building or finding solutions to personal and practical barriers, but they will also incorporate presentations from role models, analysis of their experiences, and sessions on major EU and UK bursaries and awards available in relevant fields.

“These are only the early steps in a project that we hope will become more permanent. There is a long way to go to achieve full and equal participation of women in all scientific disciplines and leading the way like this in the north east will place us apart as a leading region in Europe for diversity and excellence.”

Sarah Stewart, director of Newcastle Science City, said: “We fully support Professor Wynarczyk’s work as it will be fundamental to the success of Newcastle Science City in maximising participation in science.

“Without positive role models of people working in science and its spin-off opportunities who are willing to inspire others, we will not be able to deliver radical change in the way science is taught, learnt and practised in our region in the future.”

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Issued on behalf of Newcastle Science City by Robson Brown PR

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Notes To Editors



The Newcastle Science City initiative aims to establish North East England as one of the world's premier locations for the integration of science, business and economic development, and to break down barriers between science and the wider regional community for the benefit of all.

Newcastle Science City is a partnership between three core partners - Newcastle University, Newcastle City Council and the Regional Development Agency, One NorthEast – and also involves a wide variety of other individuals, businesses, institutions and organisations from right across the region.

The project will target commercialisation of research in four key areas - Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine; Ageing and Health; Molecular Engineering; and Energy and the Environment – where the region already excels and where potential exists to develop to an international level.

Already £25m has been invested in the North East Stem Cell Institute - a new joint venture between Newcastle and Durham Universities. A further £7m has been secured for new research laboratories at the Campus of Ageing and Vitality on the site of the city's General Hospital.

Looking to the future, the old brewery site in central Newcastle is to be transformed into a vibrant hub with facilities for research, teaching, business incubation, and specialist commercialisation and business support services.

New approaches will also be made to the way science is taught in schools, encouraging more young people to get involved and improving their exam results.

A partnership between

