THE DAPHNE JACKSON TRUST IN 2014
2014 has been a dynamic year for the Daphne Jackson Trust. I have now been Chief Executive for four years and this year I am pleased that the changes I have introduced have been consolidated, giving us a firm foundation from which to move forward and support an ever increasing number of returners.

This year twenty four new Fellows began their journey back to research, and many more successfully completed their Fellowships and are now back on their chosen career path. This record number of new Fellows meant that during the year, we had up to 52 Fellows in post at any one time in universities throughout the UK and we are extremely grateful to all the sponsors and host institutions that made this possible.

During the year we focused on developing a communications framework and published our mission statement and vision for the first time. The leading role we play in supporting returners was recognised in November 2014 when the Trust won the WISE Leadership award. This recognition highlights the importance of supporting women and men returning to their careers after a career break. Many stakeholders recognise that Daphne Jackson Fellowships can play an integral part in their efforts to improve equality and diversity in their workforce.

‘We are the UK’s leading organisation dedicated to realising the potential of scientists and engineers returning to research following a career break.’

The leading role we play in supporting returners was recognised in November 2014 when the Trust won the WISE Leadership award. This recognition highlights the importance of supporting women and men returning to their careers after a career break, something that is finally resonating at policy level across all areas of STEM in government, academia and industry.

There has been an upsurge of interest and commitment to equality and diversity issues and increasing numbers of universities, research institutes and departments are signing up to the Athena SWAN Charter. Many stakeholders recognise that Daphne Jackson Fellowships can play an integral part in their efforts to improve equality and diversity in their workforce.

Here at the Trust, we continue to extend our reach and work by contributing to advisory groups run by organisations such as the Society of Biology, the Biochemical Society and the Royal Society to develop and support best practice for returners and for ensuring diversity in the STEM workforce. We also carried out a feasibility study, supported by the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS), to investigate whether or not Daphne Jackson Fellowships could be adapted for industry.

As 2014 drew to a close, we said goodbye to our chair, Professor Dame Glynis Breakwell. We are extremely grateful to Dame Glynis for her insight and enthusiasm for the Trust and we are delighted to welcome our new Chair, Dr Teresa Anderson MBE, Director of the Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre. I am delighted that what we have achieved during 2014 is helping to bring us closer to realising our vision of seeing every UK university sponsoring and hosting Daphne Jackson Fellows, and I am very grateful to all those who are helping us on our journey.

Dr Katie Perry
Chief Executive, Daphne Jackson Trust
From application to award

The Daphne Jackson Trust is a unique organisation that offers an unparalleled level of advice and support to candidates from their first contact with the Trust, during the application and award process, and onwards through the Fellowship.

To ensure we convey this message clearly we have developed a communications framework that includes our mission, vision, aims and values. The document can be downloaded from our website.

This year we expanded our staff team to include the post of Trust Manager, Dr Karen McGregor, who is now working 3 days a week. Karen is reviewing our processes and ensuring that we maximise opportunities to support our Fellows. We also welcomed a new Trust Administrator, Ms Haritha Pattabhi, in November who coordinates and administers Fellowship applications and enquiries.

The preliminary application phase for a Fellowship involves an iterative process between candidate and Fellowship Advisors. Once this process is in place, a formal application is invited. Once the Advisors are happy for an application to proceed and funding is in place, a formal application is invited. Once applications have been peer-reviewed, they are considered by an Awards Assessment Panel that reviews applications four times a year. The panel is made up of independent experts from a diverse range of STEM research disciplines. During 2014 members of the Awards Assessment Panel considered 26 full applications of which 23 were awarded. Also in 2014, as part of our drive to ensure we meet best practice in our awards process, an Awards Strategy Committee was established, chaired by Professor Rob Eason.

Professor Eason is one of our dedicated team of Trustees who as individuals contribute a great range of expertise to our governance, and who collectively ensure our award processes remain rigorous and fair. Following the resignation of Professor Dame Glynis Breakwell, our Chair at the end of 2014, we are delighted to welcome Dr Teresa Anderson MBE, Director of the Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre who will see that the many positive changes made to the Trust in recent years become the foundation for future developments.

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New Chair of Board of Trustees

At the end of 2014 we recruited a new Chair of Board. We are delighted that Dr Teresa Anderson MBE, Director of the University of Manchester’s Discovery Centre at Jodrell Bank took up the post in March 2015.

Teresa is an experienced leader and manager with a strong background in physics and electrical engineering. She has also spent many years working in science policy and engagement with organisations such as NESTA and Practical Action.

Her deep personal commitment to supporting a wide range of people in realising their potential in science and engineering, and her experience as Chair of the Board of Trustees of the UK Association of Science and Discovery Centres (ASDC) make her an ideal person to lead the Trust forward and achieve its aims.

The Daphne Jackson Trust aims to:

• enable women and men to return to research with confidence after a career break
• maintain a talented STEM workforce by offering flexible Fellowships
• support equality and diversity in the workplace
• develop partnerships that extend the reach and increase the impact of the work of the Trust.

As Chair of Board, what contributions do you hope to make to the success of the organisation?

The Trust has made some very positive changes over the last few years so my first task will be to support the consolidation of these as a foundation for future developments. The organisation also has some high aspirations for widening its impact and I hope to be able to support it in taking these forward.

What are you most looking forward to about taking on this role?

I’m passionate about equality and diversity in science and engineering. I’m looking forward immensely to ensuring that we keep as many talented scientists and engineers as possible working in research in the future.

Why do you think the Trust’s work is important?

The Trust carries out an essential task in enabling highly skilled and qualified women and men to return to a career in STEM research after a break. Many initiatives promote diversity in the STEM research workforce by encouraging young people to choose STEM subjects and careers. It seems obvious now, but it was visionary of Daphne Jackson to realise that initiatives are also needed to support diversity at other stages of a research career. The Trust provides exactly this type of support, and is important in demonstrating that it is possible for the UK to retain a diverse and talented workforce in STEM research.

'The organisation also has some high aspirations for widening its impact and I hope to be able to support it in taking these forward.’

Dr Teresa Anderson, MBE
Daphne Jackson Trust Chair of Board

The Daphne Jackson Trust’s vision is for every UK university and research institution that supports STEM research to host and sponsor Daphne Jackson Fellows on an ongoing basis.
Assessing Fellowship applications

The application process for a Daphne Jackson Fellowship is unlike any other in the sector.

The application process itself helps applicants prepare for the reality of a research career and helps rebuild their self-confidence.

In 2014, to help ensure the Trust operates in a transparent, fair and effective manner, an Awards Strategy Committee, chaired by Trustee Professor Rob Eason, was established. The committee also helps the Trust negotiate its way through changes in funding opportunities and regulations. All decisions, policy and strategy developments made by the committee are ratified by the Board of Trustees.

Q&A

Professor Rob Eason, Chair of the Awards Assessment Panel and Award Strategy Committee

What does your role as Chair of the Awards Assessment Panel entail?

I oversee every application for a Fellowship that has progressed to the final stages of review. I assess each application, discuss any matters of concern with the Fellowship Advisor; rank each proposal; and then make a judgment on whether the Fellowship should be awarded based on an aggregate ranking from the six independent assessors selected from the Awards Assessment Panel who score each application. This can be a straightforward process, but there are occasions when concerns are expressed by the technical referees, the Fellowship Advisors or members of the Awards Assessment Panel, and in these cases the applicant is usually asked to attend an interview when they can further discuss specific points. Finally, I approve and sign off on all award offers.

How is the Awards Strategy Committee working to develop best practice in the Fellowship awards process?

During the last year or two, the Awards Strategy Committee has carefully considered revisions to the Trust regulations regarding eligibility and suitability for the scheme. We have now developed a definitive set of guidelines which makes it quite clear what employment applicants can have undertaken, and still be eligible under the rules of the Trust. Fellowship Advisors are now able to make much faster and more transparent decisions during the early stages of an application. We view this as a great improvement to the application process.

‘Seeing how a Fellowship award can transform someone’s life from a position where they are struggling to return to work following a break, to finding a position back in research, industry, or another sector, is a real joy and incredibly rewarding.’

GOVERNANCE

Trustees, Committee Members and Staff

TRUSTEES

Dr Teresa Anderson (from March 2013, incoming Chair)
Professor Dame Dyson Breakwell (until November 2014, outgoing Chair)
Professor Rob Eason
Professor Dame Julio Goodfellow (until September 2013)
Mr Philip Greenish
Ms Wendy Harle
Professor Karen Hassell

Professor Nigel Mason
Dr Mary Phillips
Mr Janet Purnell
Professor Sibel Roller
Mr Richard Rooley (until April 2014)
Professor Ted Stamp
Dr Carol Thomas
Professor John Wood

PATRONS

Professor Athene Donald
Ms Vivienne Parry
Professor Sir Christopher Snowdon

Dr Caroline Cross
Dr Nicky Evans
Mrs Elaine Hunt
Dr Helen Marsh
Dr Karen McGregor
Dr Pi Ostergaard
Ms Harsha Paturhi
Dr Katie Perry
Ms Bina Preston
Dr Katherine Rourke

STAFF

Communications & PR Manager
Fellowship Advisor
Fellowship Administrator
Trustee
Intern
Chief Executive
Finance Manager

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Dr Caroline Cross (Chair)
Dr Liz Bridg e
Mrs Bina Preston
Mrs Janet Purnell
Dr Robert Smith
Professor Tim Smith

AWARDS STRATEGY COMMITTEE

Professor Rob Eason (Chair)
Dr Liz Bridget
Dr Nicky Evans
Dr Helen Marsh
Dr Pi Ostergaard
Dr Katie Perry
Dr Katherine Rourke
Dr Carole Thomas
Professor Nicola Woodroofe

AWARDS ASSESSMENT PANEL

Professor Nigel Mason
Dr Suman Rase
Professor Sibel Roller
Professor Ted Smith
Dr Carole Thomas
Professor Nicola Woodroofe

Each eligible Fellowship applicant is designate a named Fellowship Advisor who offers support and mentoring throughout the application process and beyond.

In December 2014, the Trust held a networking event in partnership with the Royal Society of Chemistry that was attended by 60 delegates.

During structured networking sessions delegates were able to find out more about the application process for Daphne Jackson Fellowships and hear first-hand from sponsors, supervisors and current and former Fellows, exactly what benefits a Daphne Jackson Fellowship can bring.

During discussions, several themes emerged for how the Trust might increase its impact and benefits to Fellows and these are now being considered by our Trustees and I.Agree, will be implemented by our staff team.

Listening to our stakeholders

Karen McGregor joined as Trust Manager in September 2014.

Karen will use her experience of working in the Higher Education sector and for the Society for General Microbiology to ensure opportunities to support our Fellows are maximized.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I really enjoy talking to the Fellows. They are all so committed and enthusiastic and that always rubs off on me. I feel inspired about the Trust’s work and am pleased that as we go in to 2015 we already have new sponsored Fellowship opportunities in the pipeline.

What do you think is unique about the way we handle applications at the Daphne Jackson Trust?

Since joining the Trust, my ‘behind the scenes’ viewpoint has allowed me to see how much thought has gone into the application process and how it benefits the applicants. I really believe that our unique approach gives the applicants time to think about what they are going to do with their Fellowship and that this is a key element of the high success rate post-Fellowship. I’m also hugely impressed with the checks and fine-tuning of the process that are in place to meet the changing needs of the UK research environment.

Trust Manager joins the team

THE DAPHNE JACKSON TRUST APPLICATION TIMELINE

Eligibility check

Initial enquiry

Preliminary application phase

3 - 6 MONTHS

Develop and revise draft proposal

Funding secured

Invitation to apply

Final application phase

2 - 4 WEEKS

Formal interview

Submit final proposal

Peer review of proposal

Award Assessment Panel

Fellowship offered

Up to 6 MONTHS

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© Stephen Lake / Royal Society of Chemistry

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Fellows retrain and return

The Trust provides a unique blend of support and advice that ensures all Daphne Jackson Fellows rebuild the confidence and refresh professional skills that help them successfully return to research. Fellows are returning to all areas of STEM and the novel research they undertake ranges from astrophysics to nanotechnology, and genetics to nutrition.

In 2014 we received enquiries from 294 potential returners. Four out of ten of them were eligible to apply for a Fellowship. One in nine eligible enquirers was male. Twenty-four Fellows began their Fellowship during 2014, whilst a further 20 went on to their second year and 12 successfully completed their Fellowship.

During the Fellowship, each Fellow attends training courses arranged by the Trust. In 2014, four courses were available: professional skills, media and PR skills, work-life balance and presentation skills. Each course is designed to give Fellows practical advice and training to aid their transition back to a research career. The day long workshops also provide valuable opportunities for Fellows to network with others at differing stages of their Fellowships.

Many of the connections and networks Fellows build as they return to research are long-lasting and far-reaching. It is testament to their enthusiasm and commitment that we see current and former Fellows supporting incoming Fellows and championing the Fellowship scheme itself, and inspiring the next generation with science and engineering.

In 2014 the Daphne Jackson Trust supported two networking events organised in partnership with other organisations including the Royal Society of Chemistry. These events, one of which was co-organised by a current Daphne Jackson Fellow, gave Fellows opportunities to network with others in their chosen field and to share personal experiences with other returners. The events also helped the Trust broaden its reach and engage new audiences with its work.

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Increasing number of Fellows in post

Year on year we have seen a steady increase in the number of Daphne Jackson Fellows in post at Universities around the UK.

In 2014 there were up to 52 Fellows in post at any one time. Most are women who have taken a career break to care for young children or other family members. We are however, seeing an increasing number of male applicants and we were delighted to place 4 male Daphne Jackson Fellows during 2014.
Fellows in post during 2014

Regional locations of our Fellows

Two thirds of UK universities that support STEM research have hosted and/or sponsored a Fellow.
Cells: the LEGO of life

In 2014, Daphne Jackson Fellow Dr Caroline Scott (University of Oxford, sponsored by the MRC) was awarded £500 by the Biochemical Society to conduct an outreach project, entitled ‘Cells: the LEGO of Life’.

Caroline’s research is focusing on how blood cells are generated and she designed a workshop for 9-10 year old children using child-friendly materials to study different aspects of human blood cells. More than 90 children attended the workshops where they made plant and animal cells using plastic cups and bags, with jelly cytoplasm and marshmallow nuclei. They also made blood from ketchup, mayonnaise and olive oil and discussed how blood is made up of different cell types. Dressed in labcoats, gloves and goggles, the children got a taste of what it is like to be a scientist, using pipettes and measuring liquids to add to the experience.

‘The children (and staff) were really engaged with the activities on the day and they definitely grasped some basic concepts about cells. Most importantly, the children felt that science is fun.’

Dr Caroline Scott, DJ Fellow

Former Fellow supports future returner to improve patient safety

Over 2 million people in the UK take beta-blockers to control high blood pressure, but for someone who also has asthma, beta-blockers can have serious side-effects.

GP’s are careful to look at a patients history before prescribing the medications, but on rare occasions there is a prescribing error. Jill Stoddie (DJ Fellow ‘04-07) is using information collected from patients through their GPs over the last 20 years to identify where prescribing errors might have happened. She hopes that in future, patients at-risk will be identified and their treatment checked. Her work forms part of a large programme of research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) exploring patient safety in primary care and public involvement in research.

Jill is passionate about her work and says, ‘Prescribing errors in primary care cause significant harm. Adverse drug events that account for more than 1 in 20 hospital admissions. Half of these are preventable.’ Jill is now keen to help someone else return to STEM research and will be supervising a Daphne Jackson Fellow, sponsored by the NIHR Greater Manchester Primary Care Patient Safety Translational Research Centre, when the patient safety team expands later this year.

Dr Johanna Jarvis, who is returning to research with a DJ Fellowship jointly sponsored by the Open University and STFC, is using a remotely operable telescope facility to confirm whether the reduction in observed light from a star is caused by the transit of an exoplanet.

Part of her work is to automate and thereby improve the efficiency of the robotic astronomical telescope facility to confirm whether the reduction in observed light from a star is caused by the transit of an exoplanet. In the last 20 years the teams of astronomers at the University of Manchester have discovered and confirmed over 2000 planets orbiting stars outside our Solar System and our own Solar System, using the PIRATE facility to increase the number of planets it can confirm. She is also using this facility to follow up on the numerous transients, and often never before seen, objects detected by the recently launched Gaia satellite which is surveying a billion luminous objects in our Galaxy.
PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships in action

The Trust relies on ongoing partnerships with universities and sponsoring organisations to support returners. We also rely on donations from individuals and organisations that support our work in reaching out to potential returners and to help us to develop and improve the mechanisms we use to support our Fellows.

In August we welcomed representatives from the Motorola Solutions Foundation, one of our major donors, to our offices at the University of Surrey. Whilst here, Matt Blakely and Graeme Hobbs were able to see our scheme in action when Daphne Jackson Fellow Sianne Schwikkard and her supervisor Professor Dulcie Mulholland gave them a tour of the newly refurbished chemistry labs, and discussed the merits of the Fellowship scheme.

We are delighted that this year many new sponsoring organisations have come on board and will be sponsoring or hosting Fellowships in the future. Like many of our existing sponsors, several have agreed to sponsor more than one Fellow, and on an ongoing basis. In particular our partnerships with the Royal Society of Chemistry, University of Sussex and Medical Research Scotland have been cemented and we are delighted that the five research councils within RCUK that support STEM research continue to support 4 out of 10 Fellows.

It is these partnerships that ensure that all eligible and suitable candidates wishing to return to research after a career break of two or more years will have the opportunity to do so with a Daphne Jackson Fellowship.

Sharing best practice

In August 2014, our Chief Executive Katie Perry, chaired a panel discussion at the International Conference of Women in Engineering & Science in Los Angeles on best practice in returning women to STEM careers.

Representatives from two of our partners - Sheena Elliott from The Royal Society of Chemistry and Anu Khera from Motorola Solutions Foundation - joined Katie on the panel together with Carol Fishman Cohen, Director of Relaunch, a US organisation supporting women returning to STEM industries. Over 60 delegates attended the session where the panel answered questions on a number of issues that returners face including access to professional networks, loss of self-confidence and childcare costs.

Motorola Solutions Foundation visit to the Trust

Matt Blakely, Director of the Motorola Solutions Foundation, and Graeme Hobbs, Chairman of Motorola Solutions UK, visited the Trust offices at the University of Surrey, and enjoyed a tour of the University’s newly refurbished chemistry labs.

The visit was an opportunity for Matt and Graeme to meet Trust staff and also Daphne Jackson Fellow Dr Sianne Schwikkard and her supervisor Professor Dulcie Mulholland. The group were given a tour of newly refurbished laboratories, where Sianne and colleagues are exploring the medicinal properties of compounds isolated from plants. The visitors also met former Daphne Jackson Fellow Dr Gillian Forrester, a senior lecturer at the University of Westminster, and Daphne Jackson Trustee, Dr Mary Phillips.

The Motorola Solutions Foundation has generously supported the Trust’s work for the last 11 years.

Establishing ongoing partnerships

Collaborations and partnerships are central to the Trust’s success.

We are a small organisation and working with others with similar goals ensures we maximize the benefits to all partners. During the year we saw the first Medical Research Scotland (MRS) sponsored Fellows begin their Fellowships at Glasgow University. The partnership we have developed with MRS sponsored Fellows in many different countries, relating to STEM education, contribute to the advancement of medical research in Scotland. We look forward to placing a further three Fellows in 2015.

Our collaboration with the Royal Society of Chemistry also offers tremendous potential, in this case to support 25 returners to the Chemical Sciences over a five year period. It is exciting being to work with such a forward looking Learned Society that has made a firm commitment to developing the careers of women and men who have been on career breaks. We hope to develop more enduring partnerships with other learned societies in the near future.

The number of universities that work with us on an ongoing basis continues to rise, and in 2014 we established a partnership with the University of Sussex that will see us working with so many organisations committed to ensuring we maximise the potential of returners as they embark on a successful journey back to their chosen careers.

Dr Katie Perry, Chief Executive

© Stephen Lake / Royal Society of Chemistry
During their Fellowship many Fellows publish their research and secure follow-on funding to continue the work post Fellowship. Once established, they go onto make significant contributions to their research field and in many cases the work has real practical application and can bring benefits to society as a whole.

We are delighted that the impact the Trust is having in supporting returners and improving the diversity of the STEM workforce continues to increase.

The Trust was commissioned early in 2014 to carry out a feasibility study to explore the possibility of extending the Daphne Jackson Fellowship model to the commercial sector for female engineers. Although the study confirmed that the Daphne Jackson Fellowship model that works extremely well for academia, was unsuitable for use in the commercial sector, we are delighted that the government, through its new strategy for innovation and growth, will support a platform to help women return to all STEM industries.

Here at the Trust, we continue to extend our reach by contributing to steering groups and advisory groups organised by the Society of Biology and Royal Society to develop and support best practice for returners and diversity in STEM.

In November 2014 the Trust won the Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) Leadership Award. The WISE award demonstrates that as an organisation we understand the needs of returners and can provide the necessary mentoring and support that allow those who’ve taken a career break to successfully return.

Our Fellows are great ambassadors for the Trust and not only do they carry out high quality research, many of them reach out to engage young people through science clubs and festivals and encourage them to pursue STEM subjects. Others are reaching out to STEM employers and potential returners by presenting at meetings and conferences and sharing their stories of personal journeys back to research with a Daphne Jackson Fellowship.

Supporting other returners

Like many Daphne Jackson Fellows, Dr Emma Pilgrim is passionate about what she does and is keen to share her excitement for science to inspire others, and to use her experience of returning to research following a career break to help others in a similar situation.

Before Emma started her Fellowship in August 2014, she had already set up a South West Supporters Network for Daphne Jackson Fellows. Although the group has only met once in person, they have established a Facebook page and LinkedIn group and are planning further face to face meetings in 2015.

‘People who have been in similar situations can learn so much from each other. It is also the opportunity for DJ Fellows to give something back.’

Dr Emma Pilgrim, Daphne Jackson Fellow

Emma is also participating in the Society of Biology’s ‘returners to biosciences’ working group, which is committed to addressing the issues that returners face.

The Big Bang South West event was Dr Emma Pilgrim’s (right) first foray into science busking.

1 believe it is important for people who have taken a career break to have opportunities to re-use their valuable skill set. Emma says: ‘By contributing to this group I hope to alleviate some of the pitfalls and challenges I faced during my career break.’

Emma has also written a blog about her work and in August 2014 enjoyed her first foray into STEM busking at the South West Big Bang Event.

Other Fellows networks are also thriving around the country and Dr Esther Crooks, a DJ Fellow at Derby University who co-ordinates a Midlands network says: ‘These meetings are always great fun. The chance to talk to other Fellows is helpful, reassuring and energising. Daphne Jackson Fellows are often in a unique position within their research groups and these meetings offer a welcome opportunity to talk about returning to research, work-life balance and future plans with others in the same situation.’

‘It is ironic that science, uniquely, has failed to address the employment issues arising from the simple fact that it is women who bear children. Many professions (accountancy, the law, teaching etc) have managed to work out how to re-integrate women returners. Science needs more organisations like the Daphne Jackson Trust (and those bodies which support it).’

Andrew Miller MP, Chair, House of Commons Science & Technology Select Committee

Winning the WISE Leadership Award 2014 reinforces the Trust’s position as the UK’s leading organisation dedicated to realising the potential of scientists and engineers returning to research following a career break.

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Andrew Miller MP, Chair, House of Commons Science & Technology Select Committee

7 out of 10 Fellows stay in research after successfully completing their Fellowship
Autism research impacting lives
Dr Morag Maskey successfully completed her DJ Fellowship in 2013 and returned to autism research. During her Fellowship she investigated whether using a cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) approach combined with an immersive virtual reality environment could reduce specific phobia or fear in young people with ASD, and whether in turn this could lead to functional improvements in managing real life anxiety provoking situations.

The results were conclusive - 8 out of the 9 children recruited to the study benefited from the treatment, and within 6 weeks of the final VRE session, were able to tackle their target situation in real life. Four of the children completely overcame their phobia and at 6 months post treatment, improvements in target behaviours were maintained or improved in all cases.

Morang’s research was published in July 2014 and she has now secured a 3 year grant from the National Institute for Health Research to explore whether this intervention is beneficial for a further 32 patients referred from the NHS. In 2015, Morag will extend her work to look at whether the intervention is also effective for adults with autism.

“When I started in autism research, one of my aims was to carry out intervention research which improved the daily lives of those with autism and their families. This drive was born out of my own experience of having a child with autism. It has been particularly satisfying to see the difference it has made to the research participants and their families,” she said.

Maternal health and pregnancy outcomes
During her Fellowship, Dr Caroline Taylor (DJ Fellow ‘11-13) analysed lead levels in blood samples from 4,285 mother-child pairs collected during a longitudinal study called ‘the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (Children of the 90s)’.

The research found that women with blood lead levels above five micrograms per decilitre were more likely to have blood lead levels above five micrograms per decilitre than white women. Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnicity living in the same area. Caroline Taylor said “Our research reinforces the current advice to women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy that they should stop or reduce their alcohol and caffeine intake and give up smoking if they can.”

Environmental lead levels may have adverse effects of maternal lead levels on birth outcomes in the ALSPAC study; a prospective birth cohort study. Caroline M Taylor, Jean Golden, Sue M Emond. AM 2014, BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Dr Caroline Taylor, Former Daphne Jackson Fellow

Genetic analysis could speed up personalised tumour treatments
Dr Frances Pearl returned to research with a Daphne Jackson Fellowship sponsored by the Medical Research Council.

Frances analysed the DNA of tumours from over 5000 cancer patients to identify ‘weak spots’ that could be targeted with new medicines. Her Fellowship was jointly hosted by the University of Sussex and the Institute of Cancer Research, where the analysis focused on DNA repair systems that normally protect the cell from uncontrolled division, but that are defective in almost all cancers.

‘Knowing which DNA repair processes are defective in an individual tumour allows us to target new drugs that are only toxic to cells with a particular pattern of mutations - ie cancer cells,’ Frances explained.

This approach, tailored to individual cancers, could help avoid the toxic side-effects commonly experienced during chemotherapy and radiation therapy, and should help speed up the development of new personalised cancer treatments.

Frances now holds a full time position as Bioinformatics Academic Research Manager in the School of Life Sciences at the University of Sussex, where she continues her research.

Frances MG Pearl, 2015, Nature Reviews Cancer, 15.

Dr Katie Perry, Chief Executive

The novel therapy has been more effective than any of us had anticipated and it has been richly rewarding to be part of that.”

Dr Morag Maskey, Former Daphne Jackson Fellow

Reducing Specific Phobia/ Fear in Young People with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) through a Virtual Reality Environment (VRE).

Morang Maskey Jessica Lowry, Jacqui Rodgers, Helen McIcachan, Jeremy R Fair. Published: July 05 2014 PLoS One

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