



Research Careers: **Restarted**

Impact Report 2026

Supporting research returners



Welcome to the 2026 Daphne Jackson Trust Impact Report

Our Impact Report captures the difference that returner-focused support can make to individual careers and lives, as well as to the wider research landscape.

Here at the Daphne Jackson Trust, we support people returning to research after a career break of at least two years taken for family, caring or health reasons. Named in honour of Daphne Jackson, the UK's first female Professor of Physics and creator of the initial fellowships, we've helped more than 500 people return to research with confidence.

The 2026 report focuses on our research fellowships and is based on data from the 297 former fellows who responded to our 2025 former fellows' survey, as well as data held by the Trust as of October 2025. Our survey not only tells us what our former fellows are doing, but also how they are feeling, what their fellowship did for them and the positive impact it has had on their careers. Many fellows say that their fellowship and return to research after a significant career break has been transformational in their lives.

While these insights offer a powerful picture of individual impact, they also sit within an exciting period of evolution for the Trust itself. Over the last five years we have expanded to include the Republic of Ireland, extended more of our research fellowships to three years, and developed a new Research Technical Professional Fellowship.

Thank you for taking the time to explore this report and the stories and data within it.

Dr Katie Perry
Chief Executive Officer
Daphne Jackson Trust



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“Forty years on from the first fellowship, Daphne's legacy continues to demonstrate that returners strengthen not only research, but universities and the UK more widely. The significant impact these fellows have made – across their research fields, in public engagement and outreach, and within the wider sector – makes us proud to host the Daphne Jackson Trust here at the University of Surrey.”

Stephen A Jarvis, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Surrey

All financial values are shown in pounds sterling as of October 2025. Unless stated otherwise, percentages and averages are calculated based on survey respondents.

Our impact at a glance

Daphne Jackson Fellows are an exceptional investment in the future of research. By supporting returners, we help ensure that the valuable investment already made in their education and training isn't lost to the sector. Our fellows go on to make significant contributions: securing research funding, publishing new work, and driving discovery forward. Daphne Jackson Fellows bring diverse experiences and non-linear career paths back into the system, helping to create a more inclusive and representative research community and landscape for everyone.

For a detailed data breakdown, see our 2026 Data Analysis Report daphnejackson.org



Restarting careers in research

The Trust:

Awarded over **500 fellowships**

Saved over **2,400** years and almost **£80million** of research training, experience, and talent from being lost to the sector



Impacting research

Former fellows:

More than **70% remain in research active work** 5 years after their fellowship

Secured over **£87million in research funding**

Produced more than **2,200 peer-reviewed publications**



Improving research landscape

Together we:

Worked with almost **250 hosts and funders**, normalising non-linear careers across the UK

Almost **60% of former fellows continue in part-time or flexible work** after their fellowship

Continue to advocate for **equality and diversity** in research

Our research fellowships

Daphne Jackson Research Fellowships are unique. They combine a challenging research project, personalised retraining programme and bespoke mentorship to create a fellowship with support from application to completion and beyond.

Our flexible, part-time fellowships allow returners to maintain the work-life balance they need as they re-enter the research workforce. Once typically two years in length, fellowships are now increasingly offered for **three years**.

The Daphne Jackson Trusts supports research returners of **any gender** in **any area of research across the UK and Republic of Ireland**.



Professor Tzany Kokalova Wheldon



Tzany took a career break of four years for family reasons. Her fellowship in Nuclear Physics was hosted by the University of Birmingham and funded by UKRI – STFC from 2011-13.

“The Daphne Jackson Trust was my lifeline back into research. After a career break to care for my young children, returning to research full time was impossible – especially when my father was diagnosed as terminally ill. I needed flexibility, and the Trust made that possible. With their support, I rapidly built my career in nuclear physics and became a Professor at the University of Birmingham and Director of the Positron Imaging Centre. Later, I had the privilege of hosting a Daphne Jackson fellow myself.

Being one of the early fellows, I’ve seen the Trust’s network grow and transform lives. This fellowship is like no other, and I cannot thank them enough. Today, as Director of the Division of Physical and Chemical Sciences at the International Atomic Energy Agency, I work to advance science for peace and development, supporting international collaboration and capacity building worldwide.”

Fellow locations

25 fellowships awarded each year

71 current fellows

522 fellows since 1992

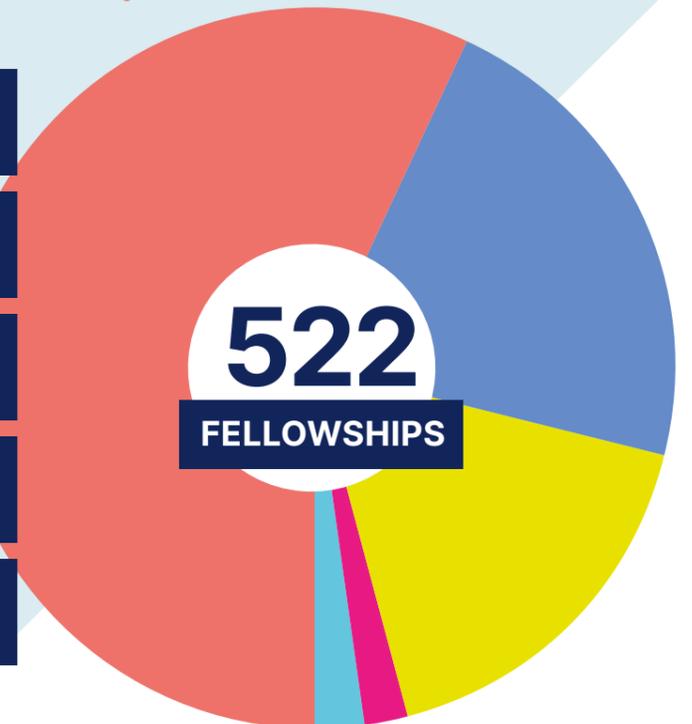
Average number of fellowships awarded per year since 2020, current and total fellows, October 2025.

Map shows relative numbers and locations of current and future fellows, and applicants awaiting fellowship confirmation, October 2025.



Fellowship research areas

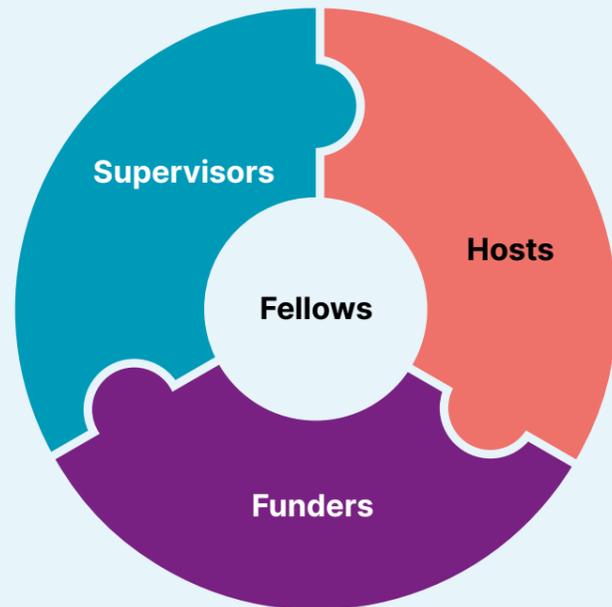
Life Sciences & Biomedicine	57%
Physical Sciences	22%
Engineering & Technology	17%
Arts & Humanities	2%
Social Sciences	2%



Percentage of all current and former fellows, October 2025

Our funders, hosts and supervisors

The success of our fellows depends on our funders, hosts and supervisors, who provide everything from funding and research facilities to support and academic guidance. In turn, Daphne Jackson Fellows contribute unique perspectives and impressive research outcomes, helping our stakeholders to develop a diverse environment for work.



Since the beginning of the Trust, we have worked with

139 funders **107** hosts **487** supervisors

Our host institutions offer the facilities, institutional support, research expenses and academic guidance that our fellows need. Hosts believe that Daphne Jackson Fellowships not only broaden opportunities for returners, but also produce exceptional researchers. Because of the positive impact of Daphne Jackson Fellows, organisations often choose to retain them at the end of a fellowship.

Our primary and secondary supervisors provide the academic guidance and oversight our fellows need for their research projects to succeed.



“Being a Daphne Jackson Trust supervisor is a very rewarding and enriching experience. Our fellow is taking full advantage of activities at the university whilst contributing a wealth of new ideas and new ways of working to the research community, which is benefitting us all. The fellowship is a precious opportunity for both of us.”

Professor Sarah Whatley
Director, Centre for Dance Research
University of Coventry and Supervisor of
Dr Kerry Francksen
UKRI-AHRC funded fellow in Dance
and Artificial Intelligence

Over 60%
of former fellows continued their employment at the same institution following their fellowship.

“The Daphne Jackson Trust Fellowships play a vital role in enabling talented researchers and innovators to return to their careers after a break, ensuring the UK research and innovation system doesn't lose important skills, knowledge and experience. So, UKRI is increasing its funding to make three-year fellowships the standard, strengthening our support for diverse career paths.”

Frances Burstow
Director – Talent and Skills,
UK Research and Innovation



@ The Royal Society, photo taken by Debbie Rowe



Our funders help fellows return to a paid research role by providing salaries, some research expenses, and support including networking opportunities. Funders include charities and charitable trusts, government bodies, industry, learned societies, research institutes, and universities.



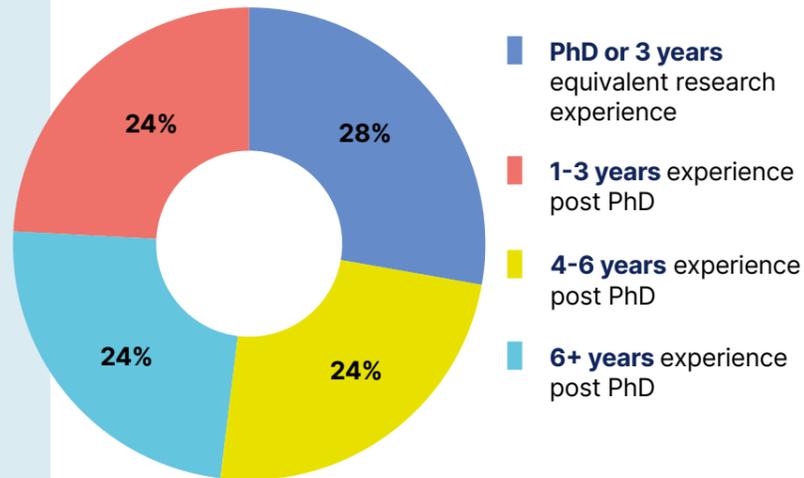
Current fellowship funders, October 2025

Fellows' career breaks

Reasons for a break

-  Caring **20%**
-  Family **49%**
-  Health **5%**
-  Combination **26%**

Fellows' research experience before a career break



Percentage of survey respondents

By returning these experienced researchers to their careers, the Trust has cumulatively saved at least **2,412 years** and **£79.8million** of training and research investment from being lost to the research sector.

That's an average of **8 years** and **£268k**.

Former fellows' career breaks are between **2 and 24 years**.

The average career break is

7 years

 **Dr Lynsey Cullen**



“After my PhD I became a carer to my parents and began what would turn out to be a 10-year career break. I never thought I'd get the opportunity to get back into academia, but when the Daphne Jackson Trust began working with academics from the Arts and Humanities, I knew I had to apply!

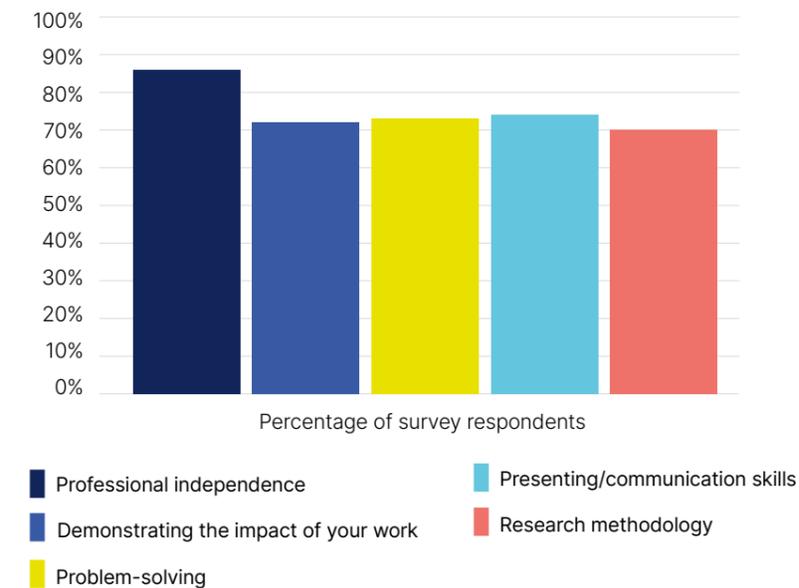
My two-year, part-time fellowship at the University of York was the perfect stepping-stone back into what I hope will be a life-long career in the History of Medicine. I'm so grateful to everyone at the Trust for all of the help and support. I wouldn't be here without them.”

Lynsey's fellowship was funded by the UKRI-AHRC, UKRI-ESRC, and funded and hosted by the University of York. She currently holds a Wellcome Early-Career Award at the University of Warwick.

Fellowship support

The unique combination of a research project, tailored retraining and mentorship provides Daphne Jackson Fellows with the skills and support they need to succeed through their fellowships and beyond.

Transferable skills developed during a Daphne Jackson Fellowship



Percentage of survey respondents



78% reported improved confidence and **79%** said their fellowship improved their prospects of securing future jobs.



More than 90% of former fellows rated the Daphne Jackson Trust **good** or **excellent**.

When asked to describe how they felt at the end of their fellowships, our fellows said:



“I liked that the fellowship was focused around training and retraining. I think this makes it stand out from any other fellowship. I feel that I gained so many skills from my fellowship which meant that I was able to demonstrate my worth and successfully obtain a research position at my institution.”

Dr Fern Findlay-Greene
Fern's fellowship in Gastroenterology and Hepatology was funded by Medical Research Scotland and hosted by Edinburgh Napier University.

Restarting research careers

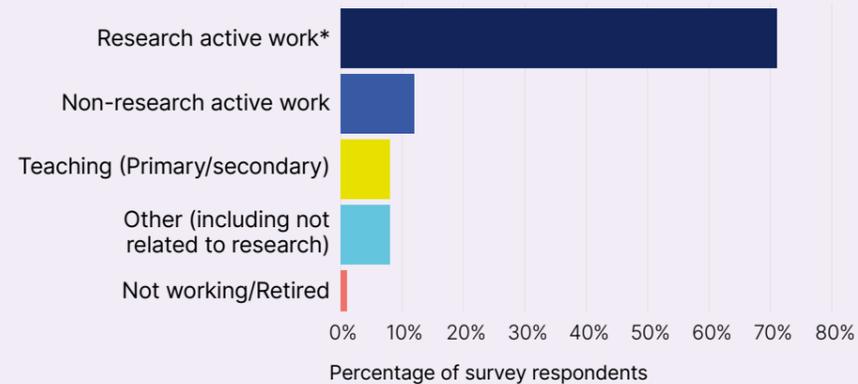
The Daphne Jackson Trust gives returners the momentum they need to move forward, turning comebacks into powerful career trajectories.

Our former fellows move into successful careers spanning sectors and seniority levels. They take on research positions, lectureships, and related roles in policy, public engagement, government, industry and the charity sector. Five years after their fellowship, **more than 70% of fellows** are still involved in research-related work.

93%

of fellows have worked in their first-choice career post-fellowship.

Careers 5-10 years after fellowship



*Those working in pure research roles, research technical professional roles, further or higher education organisations, industry or those who have started their own business related to their research.



Our survey respondents have published **2,230 peer-reviewed papers** and **1,236** additional new knowledge outputs in their careers post-fellowship.

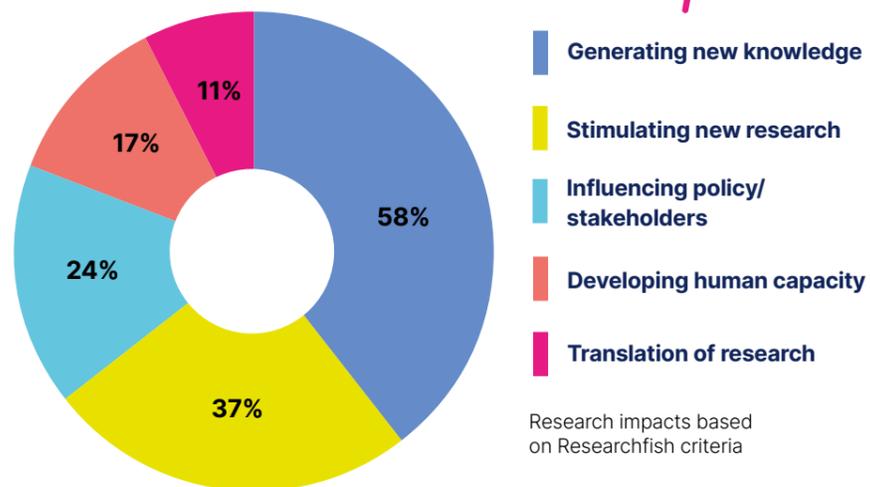
That's an average of **12** total per fellow.



Our former fellows have brought in over **£87million** in new research funding – an average of **£293K** per fellow.

That means that for every **£1** invested in Daphne Jackson Fellows, they bring in an average of **£3.50** in additional funding in their subsequent career.

Impacting research



Research impacts based on Researchfish criteria

Percentage of former fellow survey respondents reporting impacts

Improving the research landscape

The Daphne Jackson Trust and our fellows are transforming the research landscape.

We are collaborative leaders: many former fellows hold leadership positions ranging from professor and lead scientist to CEO and MP.

As champions of flexible working, non-linear careers and a more inclusive research culture, former fellows and the Trust have contributed to **over 200 policy and public engagement** activities.

56%

of former fellows continue to work flexibly or part-time as their careers progress

Of former fellows working in research related roles:

88% pursue collaborative projects

59% supervise research students



“I hope my research goes on to make a meaningful contribution to my field, but I feel equally passionate about supporting others to achieve their own research potential in a positive research environment. It is this ‘Pass it Forwards’ ethos of Daphne Jackson Fellows, hosts and the team that means the reach of the Trust extends far wider.”

Dr Jane Carre

Jane's fellowship in Urology and Nephrology was funded by Kidney Research UK and hosted by the University of Plymouth.



Dr Lauren Sullivan MP



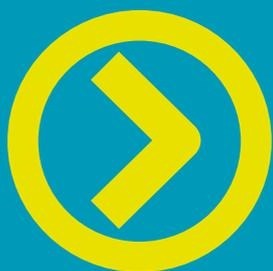
Lauren undertook her fellowship in immunology from 2017-2019, hosted and funded by the Francis Crick Institute. The Francis Crick extended the funding to allow for her part-time research until 2023. She is currently the Member of Parliament for Gravesham.

“As a research returner, I understand the importance of diverse experiences and the way in which second chances can transform lives. I'm bringing my own scientific experience into Parliament as I advocate for high quality skills education and investment in research across the UK, as well as helping to fix the leaking STEM work force pipeline so more of people's talents are utilised and realised.”

Behind every statistic in this report is a researcher whose career, confidence, and contribution have been transformed.

The Daphne Jackson Trust changes lives, giving returners the training, funding, and support they need to rejoin the research workforce. In doing so, we not only save the initial investment in their training, but also put fellows in a position to succeed. Our fellows make real research contributions – publishing papers, collaborating with peers, and bringing in millions in research funding.

Daphne Jackson Fellows not only demonstrate the importance of research returners; they are actively reshaping the research landscape for the better.



Are you or someone you know interested in a fellowship?

Could your organisation fund or host a fellow?

Get in touch daphnejackson.org



Find out more

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Instagram and Bluesky

