

# KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE NEWS 30

## CONNECTING, REFLECTING AND LOOKING AHEAD: Review of the Research, Innovation and KE Professionals Conference for 2025

Last month Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange (RIKE) delivered an inspiring and insightful conference, designed to connect us, reflect on our achievements and look ahead to the coming year.

With a clear ambition to achieve sustainable growth in Research and Innovation through strong support, investment, governance and clear articulation of our research strengths, the day was a fantastic opportunity to catch up with colleagues and celebrate some

of the outstanding contributions we make as Professional Services teams. We reflected on our long-term vision and upcoming plans, and familiarised ourselves with Faculty and University research themes and priorities to ensure we can provide the most effective support in the coming year.

We discussed adapting to the evolving Higher Education landscape, including challenges related to resources, staffing, and the financially difficult operating

environment. Conversations also covered local, national, and international political changes affecting the University.

Alongside the keynote presentations, we heard how teams in RIKE are helping our academic colleagues deliver outstanding outputs and impact, build productive partnerships and strong relationships with funders and collaborators, as well as ensuring an excellent Postgraduate Researcher (PGR) experience.

In the parallel sessions, academics who had been supported to commercialise their research, develop Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses, or establish Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) spoke about their experiences of working with teams across RIKE.

This conference was all about coming together to celebrate our successes, align our efforts, and propel the University forward with renewed energy and collaboration! We look forward to a brighter year ahead.

If you want to discuss how RIKE can support you to develop your research, then do **get in touch with our teams.**



# UNIVERSITY OF YORK PARTNERSHIP IMPROVES FOOD SECURITY FOR CHILDREN IN GHANA



In Northern Ghana, childhood malnutrition is alarmingly high, with 33% of all children showing stunted growth and 11% underweight, as reported by the 2021 Unicef/WHO/World Bank Group Joint Report. Climate change exacerbates this, causing more frequent droughts and floods, worsening food insecurity.

Recognising this complex challenge, **Dr Karolos Papadas** and **Professor Jeff Jia** from the University of York's School for Business and Society initiated a collaboration and joined forces with Professor Mamudu Akudugu and Professor Seidu Al-hassan of the University for Development Studies in Ghana, and Mr. Senyo Kpelly of Savannah and Sahel Commodities

Limited (SSCL), a local small and medium-sized enterprise (SME).

Their aim was to create a sustainable solution to address this urgent issue. In 2021, they secured an African Agrifood Knowledge Transfer Partnership (AAKTP) grant from Innovate UK. The project sought to develop a fortified blended meal of soy, rice, and maize, with the goal of feeding over 200,000 malnourished children. This initiative aligned with calls for improved school meal quality in Ghana.

Over two years, the team facilitated the transfer of cutting-edge expertise in supply chain management and marketing. The result was "C-Real," a nutritious

cereal made from locally sourced, fortified flour. This product not only addressed malnutrition but also promoted regenerative agriculture, benefiting smallholder farmers. This knowledge exchange-driven project received two Innovate UK awards in 2024: "Best AAKTP" and "Changing the World" for its significant impact. The AAKTP was supported by the University of York Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) team (Rukmal Abeysekera, Fiona Bond and Katie Ritchie).

**What is a KTP? [Learn more about Knowledge Transfer Partnerships](#)** and how they can benefit organisations you are working with.



# KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE UK CONFERENCE 2025: Universities to Play Central Role in New UK Industrial Strategy

The 2025 Knowledge Exchange UK Conference, hosted in Birmingham by Amanda Selvaratnam, Associate Director of Research Innovation and Knowledge Exchange (RIKE) and Chair of KEUK, and Stuart Wilkinson, CEO of KEUK, showcased the strong collaborative spirit within the knowledge exchange (KE) ecosystem. The event was a success thanks to all members, supporters, partners and attendees.

Many of the speakers highlighted the importance of Knowledge Exchange in translating and commercialising research to address business challenges like skills gaps, innovation and inward investment. A wide range of case studies were presented demonstrating how, by fostering collaborations with industry and small and medium-sized enterprises (SME), KE is driving economic growth and ensuring university outputs benefit society. The conference also highlighted the growing government and funder recognition of KE's value and

professional nature, emphasising the need for sustained funding and best practices.

The conference emphasised a significant shift towards greater recognition of universities and the Higher Education (HE) sector in the upcoming UK Industrial Strategy. Nancy Rothwell and David Willetts noted the increasing governmental appreciation for universities' KE mission. The forthcoming White Paper is expected to prioritise innovation and acknowledge HE's crucial contributions. Universities are seen as vital partners in addressing business challenges such as energy costs, skills, finance and regulation.

A key takeaway was the need for universities to specialise and enhance industry collaboration to bridge skills gaps, particularly in high-cost subjects. Defence spending and the UK's strengths in AI also present Research and Development (R&D) funding opportunities for HE institutions.

Insights from Research England's shared Technology Transfer Office (TTO) pilots demonstrated the value of collaborative Intellectual Property (IP) management and AI's potential in commercialisation, however sustained funding and a national repository for best practices are crucial.

Tony Soteriou of UKRI confirmed that KE, commercialisation and translation would be central to UKRI's new strategy. Efforts are underway to tackle challenges like financial sustainability, a general lack of understanding of KE's value and the under-recognition of KE as a profession. The conference concluded by emphasising universities' role in increasing their visibility to local SMEs and fostering regional partnerships, which will help to drive nationwide growth and prosperity. This memorable conference reaffirmed that universities and their outputs are key contributors to society and the economy.

**KEUK Conference 2025**  
*Delivering Mission-Driven Impact and Innovation*  
**3 - 4 June 2025 | Birmingham**

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# APPLICATIONS FOR THE YORK POLICY ACADEMY 2025/26 ARE NOW OPEN!

Open to **all professional service and academic staff** at the University of York, at any career stage, who have aspirations to influence policy through their work.

The York Policy Academy is an annual programme run by The York Policy Engine (TYPE) at the University of York. It helps staff to better understand policy engagement, expand their networks and increase their impact by connecting them with civic and political leaders through interactive, expert-led workshops.

This leading initiative is unique to the University and offers a platform for staff to extend their influence beyond the institution. The York Policy Academy offers colleagues a space to develop their skills, deepen their knowledge of policy engagement and make meaningful connections to drive real-world change.



- **Find out more**
- **Apply by 5pm Tuesday 22 July 2025.**

You'll be asked to complete a short application form with a few questions and confirm your line manager's support. Contact [type@york.ac.uk](mailto:type@york.ac.uk) with any questions.

## FORGING THE FUTURE: Make UK Members Innovate with University of York Talent



Make UK is a membership organisation that champions and supports the UK's manufacturing and engineering industry. It provides a range of services including business support, advice, training and lobbying on behalf of its members.

MAKE UK members, such as Ideal Heating/Groupe Atlantic, Magnomatics, Jepson & Co Ltd, Agemaspark, and Calder Tech recently partnered with final-year University of York's School for Business and Society students on consultancy-style projects. These projects addressed real-world business challenges, bringing fresh perspectives in areas such as sustainability, supply chain analysis and market exploration.

Professor Peter Ball of the University of York highlighted the projects' diversity, praising the students' creative and rigorous approach. Magnomatics' Operations Director, Joe Kitchen, noted that the collaboration led to recommendations influencing the execution of projects during Quarters 2 and 3 of 2025. Jepson & Co Ltd also valued the students' innovative and commercially viable solutions.

Make UK facilitates connections with educational institutions in the North, including the Universities of York, Sheffield Hallam, Bradford, and Newcastle, Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC), University of Sheffield, The Sheffield College, Blackburn College, Blackpool and The Fylde College, and Nelson and Colne College. They support project collaborations, T-Level placements, and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships.

If you are interested in engaging with MAKE UK member businesses then please contact:

James Hastie, [james.hastie@york.ac.uk](mailto:james.hastie@york.ac.uk)  
(Business Development enquiries)

Peter Ball, [peter.ball@york.ac.uk](mailto:peter.ball@york.ac.uk)  
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**Find out more...**