

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE NEWS 40

Growing Connections, Creating Opportunities: Looking ahead to my first 100 days and ambition for York

Emma Calverley, Associate Director - Business and Innovation, Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange (RIKE)

Joining the University of York as Associate Director of Business and Innovation is the latest chapter in a career spanning more than 20 years in higher education. During that time, I have worked across project management, research support, impact, commercialisation and knowledge exchange, with the last 16 years spent at the University of Hull. That breadth of experience has given me the opportunity to see universities from many different perspectives, but the common thread has always been connecting people, ideas and opportunities, and helping universities make a difference beyond their own walls.

Having joined York on 7 September, my first 100 days will inevitably involve a lot of listening and learning. I want to get to know colleagues across RIKE and the wider University, understand our commercialisation portfolio and business partnerships, and spend time with academic colleagues to hear their perspectives, ambitions and ideas.

But I also arrive with a clear sense of what I want us to achieve together. My ambition is for Business and Innovation to be an increasingly visible and connected part of the University, helping to create the conditions in which great research and expertise can translate into strong business partnerships, new products and services, licences, spinouts, investment and ultimately

economic and societal impact.

It is an exciting time to be joining York. Through Scaling Private Economy, there's a clear institutional ambition to grow the University's partnerships with business and increase our engagement with the private economy. Business development and commercialisation will both be central to that ambition. There is a real opportunity to build on York's existing relationships and expertise, develop new partnerships, and create more routes for our research, ideas and intellectual property to reach businesses, investors and markets.

Within Business and Innovation, there is already a wealth of expertise, strong relationships and exciting activity underway. My role is to provide leadership across that portfolio and support our teams to build on those foundations. That means looking outward, understanding what businesses, investors and partners need and where York can make a distinctive contribution. Just as importantly, it means looking inward, building awareness, interest and capacity across the University so that more colleagues feel able and supported to explore the opportunities that business engagement and commercialisation can offer.

By day 100, I want to have a clear view of where our biggest opportunities lie, what we want



to prioritise and how we can work collectively to pursue them.

For me, that is the exciting part: creating more opportunities for York's people, ideas and research to make an impact in the world.

So, if you have an idea with commercial potential, an existing business relationship you think could grow, or simply want to understand what support is available, please get in touch with me or the Business and Innovation team. And if we haven't met yet, I'd love to hear from you on emma.calverley@york.ac.uk

Co-Creating Heritage: Partnering with English Heritage to create lasting legacy of 17th-century trailblazer Margaret Cavendish

Keith Allen, Head of Department, Department of Philosophy



Collaborative Heritage and Reclaiming a Pioneer

Supported by a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, **Margaret Cavendish's Mind Lab** is a collaboration between English Heritage and the University of York. The aim is to increase awareness of Margaret Cavendish and her trailblazing life and work through a programme of events, online resources, and new onsite interpretation at **Bolsover Castle**.

Cavendish was a pioneer in literature, philosophy, and science. Her 'Blazing World' has a claim to being the first novel written in English and one of the first works of science fiction. She was the first woman to attend a meeting of the Royal Society and one of the most prolific female authors of the seventeenth century. Many of her published works engaged with philosophical and scientific issues.

Challenging Stereotypes and the Value and Importance of Philosophy

Cavendish's work helps to challenge stereotypes about the role of women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), while also illustrating the value and importance of the arts and humanities in general, and philosophy in particular. Philosophy is not a core subject in the school curriculum and can be seen as abstract and difficult. One aim of the project is to show that thinking about big questions is enjoyable and accessible.

Knowledge Exchange and Community Impact: Volunteer Empowerment and Lasting Legacy

During the first year of the project, the Bolsover Young Thinkers group have been exploring philosophical and scientific questions, such as whether animals, vegetables and minerals can think, while the Bolsover Young Writers have been building their own fictional worlds. We've also been training volunteers at Bolsover to help them introduce visitors to Cavendish.

Some of these first-year collaborative ideas culminated in MindFest!, a one-day community-curated celebration of Cavendish's work at Bolsover Castle, that offered the public hands-on creative workshops and immersive STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) activities directly inspired by Cavendish's theories.

Following a successful celebration that brought together the Architects of Air's Luminarium Daedilite, stargazing, yoga, personalised poetry, and flash philosophy, the project is entering its second year. Its key aim is to create a permanent onsite interpretation for Margaret, expanding her presence beyond her framing as William Cavendish's second wife.

Find Out More and Get in Touch

Interested in learning more? Listen to the podcast episode **A Voice for After-Ages: The radical life of Margaret Cavendish**, featuring Philosophy PhD student Sophie White.

For more information on the project visit the **English Heritage website**.

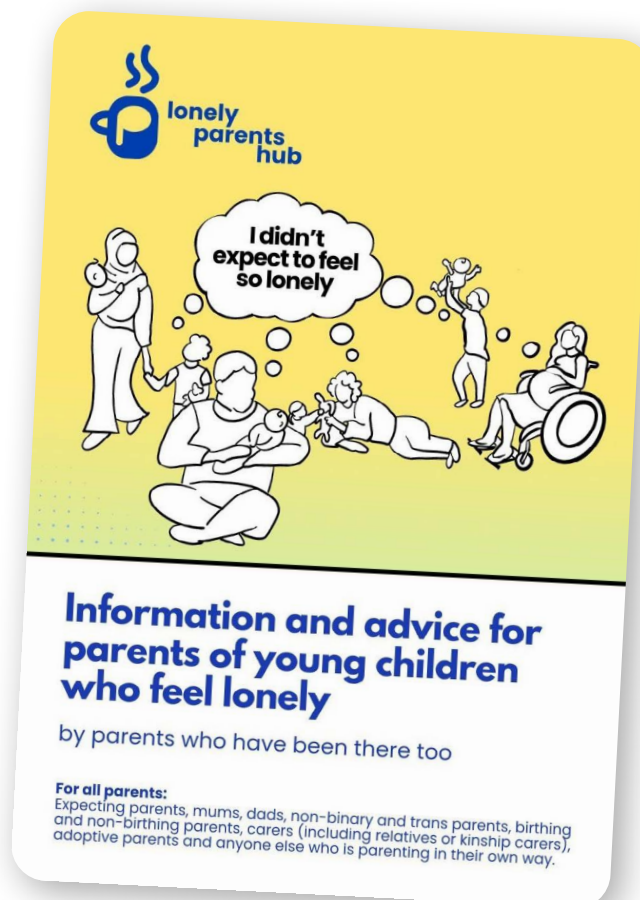
The University of York is a hub for **heritage research excellence**.

From Research to Real-World Impact: Coproducing Solutions to Perinatal Loneliness

The **Coproducing Solutions to Perinatal Loneliness Project** led by **Dr Ruth Naughton-Doe** in the Family Wellbeing Team prioritised developing a knowledge exchange plan to disseminate findings to parents, professionals and policymakers to maximise impact and make a difference to parents' lives. In the UK, it is estimated that 1 in 4 parents experience mental health problems during pregnancy and the first 2 years after childbirth. This is known as the perinatal period. Loneliness and isolation during this period (known as perinatal loneliness) can have lasting effects on parents and their children.

This project began with a Fellowship funded by the **National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Three Schools Mental Health Programme** and aimed to develop solutions. From its inception, the work has been guided by lived experience, **including Ruth's own**. A diverse Research Advisory and Impact Group, including parents and healthcare professionals, alongside multidisciplinary consultation with academic partners (University of Oxford, University of Lincoln and University of Exeter), charity collaborators (**Hearts and Minds Partnership, LGBTQ Mummies, Proud 2 b Parents, Dad Matters**), and organisations advocating for policy change (**Institute of Health Visiting, Maternal Mental Health Alliance, National Children's Bureau**), contributed to the research and the development of outputs.

To ensure findings reach those who need them most, outputs are shared on the **Lonely Parents Hub** website in accessible, varied formats. Practical resources include:



- **A booklet containing information and advice for parents who feel lonely**, written by parents who have been there too.
- **An easy-read report of solutions for professionals and policy makers viewed over 4,000 times.**
- **An animated film illustrating real-life experiences of loneliness.**

Prioritising designing resources for dissemination and translation into impact has led to:

- **Empowering health visitors** and perinatal teams to adopt new perspectives on loneliness.
- Presenting research findings at Westminster and launching a joint **policy briefing** with partners at the National Children's Bureau.
- Co-designing and piloting a **novel parent-and-baby walking group** within a perinatal peer support

service, alongside the **Sisters Walking group** created specifically for Muslim mothers.

Highlighted in an **NIHR Impact Case Study**, the project illustrates how co-designed research outputs can effectively reach diverse audiences and drive meaningful impact.

By positioning perinatal loneliness as a critical public health and social care priority, the initiative continues to establish sustainable, community-driven solutions while transforming professional practice. Impact and knowledge exchange works really well when the users of the research are involved from the start and genuine collaborations inform research priorities and dissemination strategy. Remember that everyone can be involved in supporting parents - check in on your colleagues, friends and family.