

2023 Research Awards



2023 Research Awards



We are delighted to introduce our new Research Awards, which include new categories to celebrate the excellent research taking place across the University that addresses real-world problems and improves academic practice.

The Awards build on the success of the Research Engagement and Impact Awards which began in 2017 and include four categories: External Collaboration and Partnerships, Openness in Research, Public Engagement with Research and Research Impact.

Research engagement and impact take many forms and the new categories reflect the depth and breadth of activities taking place by all research and associated professional services staff. They celebrate work that showcases research excellence as well as fostering a positive research culture and environment.

We received over 50 strong entries from across a wide spectrum of our research and the quality of the work demonstrates just how committed colleagues are to making a difference through their research, despite the challenges we have faced over the last couple of years.

Each of the shortlisted projects described here addresses a significant challenge and engages individuals, organisations or communities to bring about positive change; from helping smallholder farmers in India improve fruit and vegetable yields, to developing diversity and inclusion training for use in policing.

We congratulate every one of the researchers who applied for the awards this year and hope that the projects described here inspire you to find out more about our research and the ways we work together to ensure research brings benefits to all.

Professor Parveen Yaqoob and Professor Dominik Zaum
Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Research and Innovation)

Shortlisted Projects

External Collaboration and Partnerships

Helen Bilton, Nicky McGirr, Anastasia Rattigan, and Andrew Jacques, Dana Kelly (Royal Berkshire Hospital)	Teachers share skills with hospital staff	4
Naomi Flynn	Helping multilingual children find their voices	6
Deepa Senapathi and Mike Garratt	Flower-powered farming boosts biodiversity and crop yields	8

Openness in Research

Helena Clarkson, Nicola Wilson and MAPP virtual volunteers	Volunteers shed light on modernist publishing	10
Shovonlal Roy	Measuring ocean biological carbon from space	12

Public Engagement with Research

Hannah Cloke, Liz Stephens & Water@Reading research group	Explaining flood forecasts to save lives	14
Duncan Garrow	A million explore the World of Stonehenge	16
Alice Mauchline and Close the Gap project team	Let's talk about hedges	18

Research Impact

Rita Fontinha and James Walker	Shaping thought on flexible working	20
Anna Macready	In food we trust	22
Netta Weinstein, Maya Al-Khouja, Florencia Santana (Hampshire Constabulary), Nicole Legate (Illinois Institute of Technology)	Serving and protecting, everyone	24

Teachers share skills with hospital staff

The PGCert Healthcare Education Team: Working together to solve problems

Helen Bilton, Nicky McGirr, Anastasia Rattigan, and Andrew Jacques, Dana Kelly (Royal Berkshire Hospital)

Teaching specialists have teamed up with the Royal Berkshire Hospital (RBH) to create a unique Healthcare Education programme for all staff who teach: doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and pharmacists. By strengthening teamwork and mutual understanding as well as improving teaching skills at the hospital, the collaboration is driving improvements in patient care and patient safety.

Healthcare educators at RBH have expanded their teaching skills to benefit patients' care through a fruitful collaboration between the Institute of Education's Professor Helen Bilton and the RBH's Dr Andrew Jacques.

The University partnership with educators at the hospital has co-created a PGCert

Healthcare Education programme. It is open to all healthcare practitioners who teach others, covering a wide range of learning episodes from the ad hoc to structured classroom experiences, using a variety of educational tools including simulation.

Now in its third year, an impact survey shows that mutual understanding is now stronger between the different professionals who've completed the course – from anaesthetists to midwives, working across specialisms from oncology to intensive care.

Getting 'under the bonnet' of what makes a good educator has been key to its success. First attendees consider what works for them as learners before considering how to change others' behaviour. They work in multidisciplinary teams, utilise bespoke learning materials funded by the Health Innovation Partnership, including video materials, simulations and case studies, gaining mutual understanding along the way.

This collaboration combines the expertise of teachers, healthcare educators and the online courses team. Their next mission is to improve communication in healthcare, spurred by the conclusion of a recent UK government maternity service review that 'staff who work together must train together'. New research will look to boost communication via simulations of good and bad practice and conversation-provoking materials to drive change.

Partners

Royal Berkshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
University of Reading Online Courses Team

Funders

Health Innovation Partnership

"Opened my eyes into how others learn and how I can improve my ability to teach."

"The multidisciplinary nature of the course is a huge positive."

Course students

Judges' comment

"An excellent project based on a trusted and still-developing relationship with the Royal Berkshire Hospital which has clearly benefitted both parties and been built to be sustainable and of continual benefit to those involved."



Helping multilingual children find their voices

Bringing successful teaching for multilingual learners from the US to the UK

Naomi Flynn

US and Reading teacher educators have joined forces with UK multilingual primary schools to improve teaching for children whose home languages are not English. By coaching teachers to talk less, and let their children talk more, teaching has become more intentionally conversational and multilingual children have found their voices.

Children whose first language is not English may make less progress than their English-speaking peers but there is limited professional development to support teachers in the practices that address this.

A unique partnership between Professor Naomi Flynn, Indiana University's Professor Annela Teemant, and Aspire Community Trust schools in Southampton tackled both

challenges. With PhD student Aniqā Leena and Reading's Professor Suzanne Graham, they adapted and tested Teemant's Enduring Principles of Learning (EPL) approach which encourages teachers to design classroom activities which are talk-rich and culturally sustaining.

After a pilot EPL professional learning project in 2019/20, Flynn observed improved teaching and pupil engagement in Headteacher partner Emma Kerrigan-Draper's Southampton school of 98% multilinguals. This fostered the four-school 2022 Talk-Rich Teaching Project, where test results showed that where teachers used the UK adaptation of the EPL this boosted multilingual children's English speaking, listening and reading skills.

Involving schools' staff as equal partners was critical to the project's success because schools need professional learning bespoke

to their settings. Project outcomes will inform the design of a toolkit for upscaling rollout of school-led, sustainable change for enhancing multilingual children's educational success. Internationally the project continues as a two-way trans-Atlantic collaboration seeking solutions to shared educational challenges.

Partners

Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis

Mount Pleasant Junior School, Southampton

Aspire Community Trust, Southampton

Funders

Fulbright US/UK Commission

University of Reading Research Fellowship

"Now our children are routinely described as being strong orators, articulate children, who increasingly are transferring those skills into their reading, writing and other curriculum outcomes."

Emma Kerrigan-Draper, Headteacher

Judges' comment

"An impressive project, using the insights and expertise of the various collaborators to their fullest, that has far-reaching implications for learners across the nation and globe."



Flower-powered farming boosts biodiversity and crop yields

Empowering smallholder communities to co-design ecological interventions to improve sustainability

Deepa Senapathi and Mike Garratt

Planting insect-friendly flowers alongside crops is helping smallholder farmers in India improve fruit and vegetable yields while using fewer damaging agrochemicals, thanks to research co-developed by Reading ecologists, alongside Indian researchers and smallholder farmers. This win-win approach for both nature and sustainable food production is changing local practices, and informing national and international policy on biodiversity.

Around 40% of India's population works in farming. Many smallholders rely on using unsustainable and costly fertilisers and pesticides to eke out a living. But this degrades the environment and harms biodiversity.

Reading ecologists Dr Deepa Senapathi and Dr Mike Garratt worked closely with the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation and 64 smallholder farmers in Tamil Nadu, India to co-design and test solutions to show that planting insect-friendly flowers in orchards and fields boosts the numbers of beneficial insects that contribute to pollination and pest regulation in crops and reduces agrochemical use.

From marigolds sown in okra crops, to sesame blooms among mango orchards, the flowers chosen, with help from the farmers, are home to beneficial insects like bees and other insect pollinators as well as spiders and ladybirds which prey on crop pests such as stem borers and other caterpillars.

News of the project's success spread through farming networks and village knowledge centres. More than 40 Tamil Nadu

farmers have since followed suit, reaping the rewards of the partners' so-called 'ecological intensification' approach.

Senapathi and team are raising awareness through a local language farmers' handbook and pollinator wall calendars. Their short films aimed at policy-makers and farmers are pushing the findings to a national level. Working with collaborators at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Promote Pollinators, the films will inform policy briefs for the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, bringing flower-powered farming to international attention.

Partners

M S Swaminathan Research Foundation

"We sowed sesame this year and it flowered successfully. This then led to higher fruit set and greater yield in mangoes. We had income from both the sesame and mango crops, so it was a double benefit for us."

Jayaraj, mango farmer

Judges' comment

"A very impressive, well designed and rigorous project demonstrating the practical application of research and the active involvement of non-specialists in the process."

Funders

Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF)

University of Reading



Volunteers shed light on modernist publishing

Virtual volunteering: Transcribing publishing correspondence in the Modernist Archives Publishing Project (MAPP)

Helena Clarkson, Nicola Wilson and MAPP virtual volunteers

The public have joined forces with academics and archivists to transcribe letters written between twentieth century book publishers and authors from The Hogarth Press publishing house, created by Virginia and Leonard Woolf. This co-created digital archive shines a light on this fascinating period, opening up a sample of Reading's archives and Special Collections to wider audiences.

Letters sent by Virginia and Leonard Woolf from their Hogarth Press publishing imprint and its authors are among 1,000 digital images that have been transcribed by volunteers for the University's archives. Guided by archivists and academics, members of the public have worked

remotely to transform selected twentieth century correspondence and financial documents into findable, searchable and more accessible records.

The virtual volunteering pilot project is part of The Modernist Archives Publishing Project (MAPP), a digital archive focusing on book publishing and an international teaching and research project. Archivist Helena Clarkson and Sheila Fisher, Volunteer Coordinator, enlisted 29 local people, from students to history fans, to co-create a vibrant resource for the public and researchers alike. So far, they've spent over 500 hours transcribing more than 1,000 items. Along the way they've enjoyed glimpses into a period of publishing history when book-buying boomed and progressive new writers' voices began to be heard.

The team at Reading designed their own training resources for the project which will be reused and shared with other libraries and archives partnering on MAPP. They've built on experiences of virtual volunteering beginning during the pandemic, engaging the local communities with collections. Furthermore, they have gained insight into participatory research and archiving methods, such as 'gamifying' the archiving process, strengthening equitable archiving practices and opening the University's archives to ever broader audiences.

Partners

Modernist Archives Publishing Project

University of Reading Museums and Special Collections

Centre for Book Cultures and Publishing

"I find the subject matter to be fascinating... this has meant I've genuinely enjoyed the work, which didn't really feel like work at all. I really feel like I've been able to contribute to academia, and, more specifically, the field of twentieth century literature, even if it has been in a small way."

Saniya Mehmood, Virtual volunteer

Judges' comment

"An excellent project which developed innovative activities for the public to contribute to academic research and where the mutual benefit of volunteering is clear."

Funders

Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)



Measuring ocean biological carbon from space

Open-access novel ocean carbon products derived from earth observation for climate studies and societal benefits

Shovonlal Roy

Climate scientists have a clearer picture of how much carbon is absorbed by our oceans and its implications for climate change, thanks to a new way to measure ocean carbon from satellite images. Its Reading developers have made their code and data freely available for research, doing a good turn for science, society and the planet.

Oceans are Earth's most important carbon sinks. This is down to phytoplankton: tiny, green, marine organisms which carry planet-warming carbon from the ocean's surface to its depths, locking it away. So-called oceanic biological carbon is of great interest to climate scientists, policy-makers and the fishing industry, but getting hold of specific information about it from satellites is not easy.

Reading environmental scientist Dr Shovonlal Roy has developed new algorithms and computer code that use the varying colours of the ocean as it appears in satellite images to generate data on how much phytoplankton there is, and therefore how much carbon.

Roy has also worked with NASA and European Space Agency-funded scientists to generate new datasets which show how oceanic biological carbon is distributed on a global scale. They've made these tools and datasets freely available to be re-used by anyone for the common good, in any programming language.

The work has met climate scientists and policy-makers' long-held need for more accurate ocean carbon estimates for studying how climate change is affecting the oceans, the global carbon cycle and net zero.

This much-in-demand data has now been used in many publications worldwide, underpins NASA-funded research, and is central to a proposed major new Plymouth Marine Laboratory-led project on how 'blue carbon' contributes to the world's carbon budget.

Partners

California State University San Marcos

University of Pennsylvania

Plymouth Marine Laboratory

Funders

Royal Society

European Space Agency

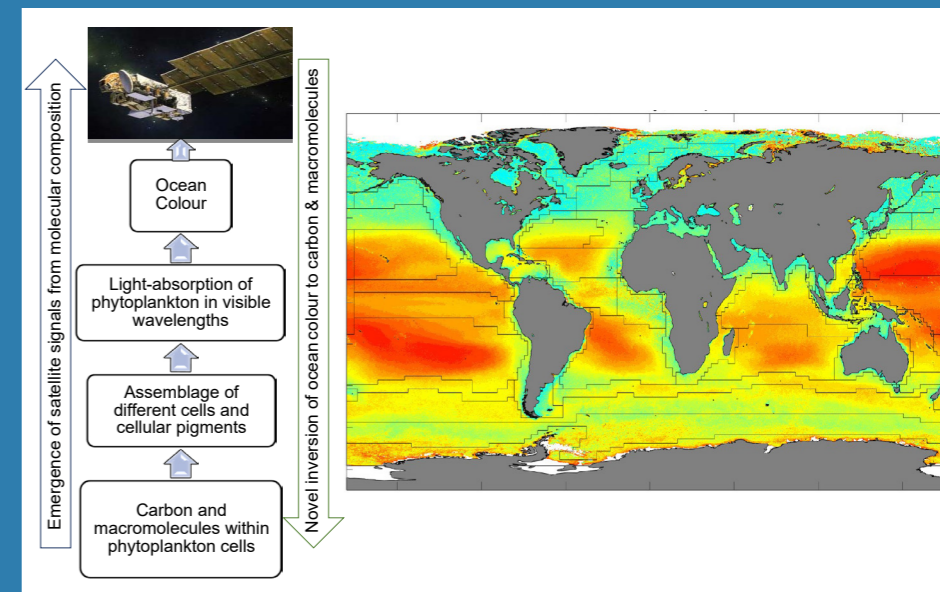
NASA

"Shovon has developed generic and reusable algorithms of phytoplankton carbon pools in the ocean, based on fundamentals of phytoplankton bio-optics. He has taken the extra effort to ensure that end users can implement the algorithm operationally. His algorithms are instrumental for deriving an ocean carbon budget from satellite remote sensing."

Dr S. Sathyendranath, Merit Remote Sensing Scientist, Plymouth Marine Laboratory

Judges' comment

"A great example of open research for code and data with good reach and impact as well as strong links with partners and collaborators and a clear direction of travel for the future."



Explaining flood forecasts to save lives

Dreaming of disaster: Using imagination to save lives in floods

Hannah Cloke, Liz Stephens & Water@Reading research group

Hundreds of people died from disastrous floods in Europe in 2021, despite scientists alerting the authorities days ahead. Reading hydrologists, who designed Europe's flood warning system, spoke out immediately about the lack of action. This led to widespread discussion with politicians and the public through parliaments, media, and a major museum show, spurring better flood preparedness.

When catastrophic floods killed 243 people across Europe in July 2021, some politicians and media outlets incorrectly claimed the size of the floods had been impossible to foresee. In fact, the European Flood Awareness System (EFAS), designed by Reading hydrologists, had

accurately forecast the disaster and scientists had alerted the authorities, days in advance.

The Water@Reading research team spoke out via media briefings and interviews explaining the science behind flood forecasting, generating hundreds of articles. Professor Hannah Cloke's description of authorities' 'monumental system failure' to warn people became front page news across Europe. Dr Liz Stephens explained how flood warnings should work, and Dr Jess Neumann described how intense summer rainfall caused the floods. PhD researcher Jeff Da Costa criticised the Luxembourg government's response and lost his job at an environmental consultancy. His sacking led to questions in parliament and accusations of political interference and undue pressure on scientists.

The team's expertise is influencing policy in Germany to keep people safe. Cloke twice gave

evidence at German parliamentary inquiries assessing the disaster response. Germany now has a national mobile phone alert system for emergencies, an action called for by the Reading team.

Cloke's ongoing commentary on better communicating forecasts, including in *New Scientist*, have propelled her to appear on BBC Radio 4's *The Life Scientific* and to collaborate with the Science Museum on an exhibition, explaining flood forecasting to fresh audiences.

Partners

European Centre for Medium-range Weather Forecasts

Science Museum

"Science fictional thinking [uses] imagination and creativity to visualise scientific problems, extrapolate outcomes, and perhaps develop solutions. We were instantly drawn to the work of Professor Hannah Cloke, who explores these topics and more in her work."

Dr Glyn Morgan, Lead Curator, Science Museum exhibition

Judges' comment

"A particularly strong example of a proactive programme of engagement with publics and governments to enhance understanding of and trust in research."

Funders

Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)



A million explore the World of Stonehenge

World of Stonehenge

Duncan Garrow

The British Museum's World of Stonehenge exhibition, co-curated by a Reading archaeologist, has given a million people a window into the lives of prehistoric people, through artefacts, soundscapes and events. Its legacy of online lectures, research and an exhibition book continues to link us with our distant past.

Over a million people have gazed into prehistory through the British Museum's 'World of Stonehenge' exhibition and its outreach activities, co-curated by Reading archaeologist Professor Duncan Garrow and the Museum's Dr Neil Wilkin.

Using Stonehenge's global fame to draw visitors into the wider prehistoric world, the

highly acclaimed 2022 exhibition explored the travel and technologies of prehistoric people, how beliefs and materials were shared across Europe and their links with the natural world – from stone and wood to sea and sky. Soundscapes, projections and artefacts came together to transport visitors across the millennia.

Over 179,000 people came through the Museum's doors, and hundreds of thousands more have been to events and watched online lectures. One talk, 'Stonehenge's Richest Man' has been enjoyed 182,000 times. Others attended events for schools, families and other groups, including sign language tours and community previews for homeless charities.

World of Stonehenge's legacy continues. Garrow and Wilkin's critically acclaimed exhibition book has sold over 20,000 copies.

The pair are collaborating on new UKRI-funded research, using the exhibition as a research site to re-think symbols of power at the time of Stonehenge, and exploring innovative, alternative ways of presenting our prehistoric past within museums in future.

Partners

British Museum

Funders

University of Reading/British Museum joint development fund

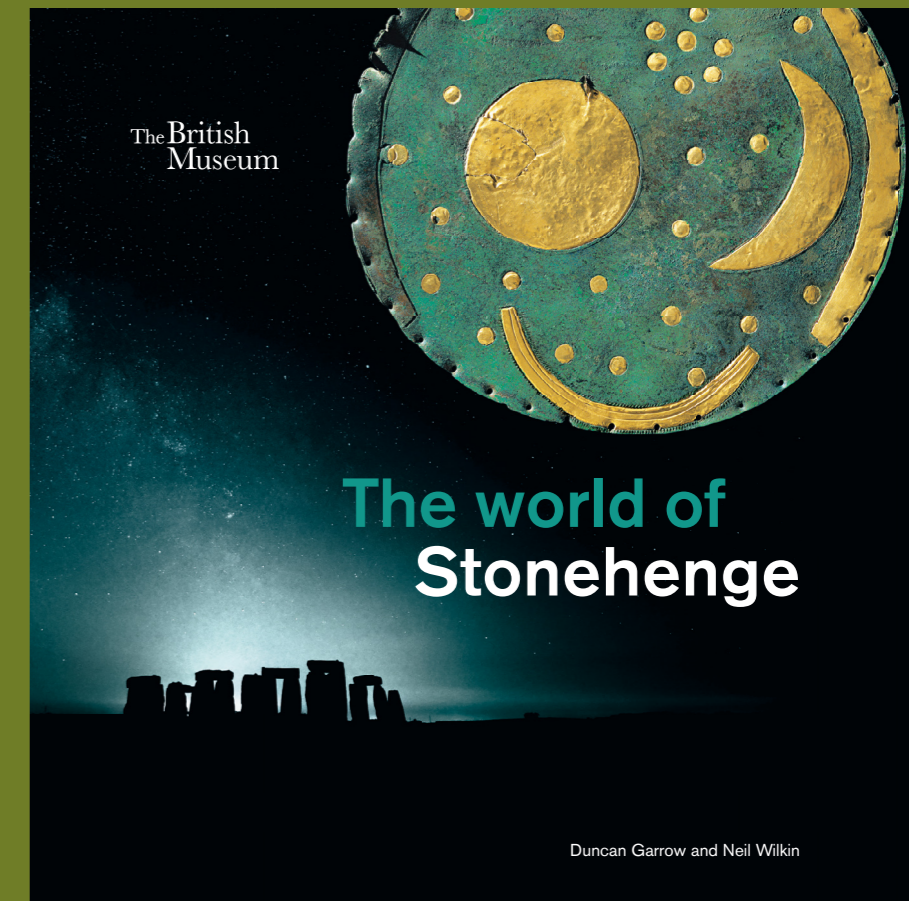
Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)

"The exhibition book was absolutely key to the delivery and legacy of the World of Stonehenge project, feeding cutting-edge research into what became a hugely successful show that reached hundreds of thousands of people."

Neil Wilkin, British Museum

Judges' comment

"Building on the collaboration between the University and the British Museum, this ambitious landmark exhibition achieved impressive and far-reaching impact and outreach."



Let's talk about hedges

Close the Gap hedgerows project

Alice Mauchline and Close the Gap project team

Our beautiful hedgerows support biodiversity, prevent flooding and counter climate change, but half have been lost in recent decades. A team of Reading researchers are informing the public about their benefits through educational resources, videos, webinars and a National Hedge Week, getting people talking and creating thousands of new hedgerow enthusiasts.

The UK needs bigger, healthier and better-connected hedgerows to help our flagging biodiversity. Humble hedgerows are homes for bats, dormice and pollinating insects as well as crop pest-munching insects like spiders. They can also help prevent flooding, keep soil healthy, cool the air on hot days, mop up pollution and absorb carbon. But over the past 80 years we've lost half what we once had.

As part of the Green Recovery Challenge Funded Close the Gap project, Reading ecologists Dr Alice Mauchline, Dr Mike Garratt and the team are educating and enthusing people about hedgerows' vital importance. They've led interactive workshops to understand what different people value about hedgerows and brought together the scientific evidence for hedgerows' benefits. Education and training materials they've created and collated are tailored to different audiences, from town-dwellers to farmers.

This has culminated in Hedge Hub, the go-to online resource for all things hedge, from how to lay them to hedge-related laws. Hedge Hub's hundreds of resources and papers have had over 20,000 visits from members of the public in its first year.

The Reading team continue to work with key partners including the Tree Council and Hedgelink to reach wider networks. Their free

HedgeTalks webinar series has been enjoyed by more than 1,000 people and they helped to launch National Hedgerow Week, now into its third year, which is starting new conversations about hedges everywhere.

Partners

The Tree Council

Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group

People's Trust for Endangered Species

Moor Trees

Future Gardeners
(Worshipful Company of Gardeners)

Hedgelink

Funders

Green Recovery Challenge Fund

"Close the Gap will boost the immense potential of our hedgerows – for biodiversity, carbon-capture, conserving our natural cultural heritage and more. We want everyone to understand and value their local hedgerows."

Sara Lom, CEO, The Tree Council

Judges' comment

"A very impressive project that has had significant reach and several excellent outcomes that demonstrate a clear interaction with, and benefit to, the public."



Photo: Jon Stokes, The Tree Council

Shaping thought on flexible working

The four-day week: The pandemic and the evolution of flexible working

Rita Fontinha and James Walker

Henley Business School research on how the pandemic has changed uptake of the four-day working week has reached around 82.5 million people through a hugely successful media campaign, establishing Reading as the go-to place for media commentary on flexible working.

Insightful research on how the pandemic affected UK businesses' uptake of the four-day working week has made Henley Business School the first port of call for journalists seeking expert comment on flexible working.

Dr Rita Fontinha and Professor James T. Walker surveyed 2,000 employees and 500 business leaders in 2019 and 2021 and their in-depth report showed that the pandemic saw a 15%

rise in businesses bringing in a four-day work week. The research also showed that the combined savings to UK businesses adopting a four-day work week was almost £104 billion in 2021, or 2.2% of total annual turnover, up from £92 billion before the pandemic.

Fontinha and Walker's findings have exploded across the global stage, reaching an estimated 82.5 million people across 12 countries through 146 pieces of coverage, including in The Times, The i and BBC online. The research has also featured in high profile business publications on the topic by Forbes, MIT Sloan Management and Microsoft.

Commentary has now turned to action on a national scale: Fontinha is coordinating a Portuguese national trial of the four-day week. This partnership – between the Portuguese government, research institutes and the non-

profit 4 Day Week Global – looks set to keep the research in the media spotlight in Portugal and beyond.

Partners

(on the Portuguese pilot)

Four Day Week Global

Birkbeck, University of London

Portuguese Institute for Work and Employment

Funders

Henley Business School

Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security, XXIII Portuguese Government

"Dr Rita Fontinha and Professor James T. Walker have conducted the first survey on the attitudes of managers and workers towards the four-day week in the UK. I was very impressed with the quality of their research, so when I was invited by the Portuguese government to coordinate their four-day week trial, I did not hesitate to reach out and ultimately invite Dr Rita Fontinha to co-coordinate the project."

Dr Pedro Gomes, Reader in Economics at Birkbeck, University of London, and Coordinator of the Portuguese Pilot of the Four Day Week

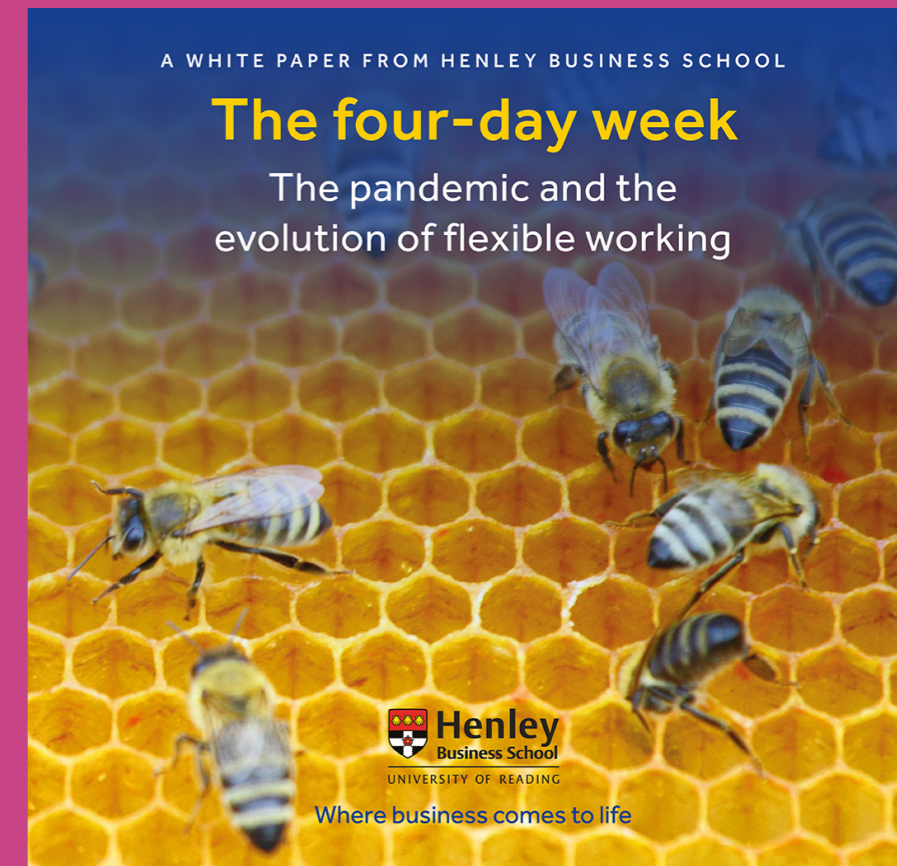
Judges' comment

"Strategic use of the media led to significant reach that has enhanced public understanding of the value and uptake of the four-day week with promising impact evidenced by the Portuguese trial."

A WHITE PAPER FROM HENLEY BUSINESS SCHOOL

The four-day week

The pandemic and the evolution of flexible working



In food we trust

EIT Food TrustTracker® consumer survey:
Moving towards a more trusted food system

Anna Macready

If we are to eat more healthily and sustainably, we have to be able to trust the food system. Reading consumer behaviour experts have worked with an EU body and the food industry to better understand people's trust in farmers, manufacturers, retailers and the authorities, with the findings shaping international policy.

Trust plays a big part in people choosing healthier, more sustainable foods, research has shown – yet less than half of Europeans say they trust the food system.

Reading Consumer Behaviour expert Dr Anna Macready has developed TrustTracker®: an evidence-based model of what drives consumer trust in the food system. Working with EU knowledge innovation community

EIT Food, TrustTracker® has generated over 81,000 surveys and is now part of its Consumer Observatory programme.

Openness and care are the most important qualities when it comes to trust in our food, findings show, and farmers are the supply chain's most trusted people. Our trust in food has also increased over the past five years, according to annual surveys across 18 European countries and Canada.

Macready's data has been seen by policy-makers and food industry representatives at key conferences and appears in EIT Food's annual Trust Report, informing its trust-building activities. A successful PR campaign has reached 1.2 million readers.

What is more, the Reading team has advised seven food start-ups on consumer trust and launched a Top 50 Trusted Brands competition in Denmark to engage top brands

and understand and boost trust. The OECD commissioned an extension of the annual survey to Canada in 2022, bringing the benefits of better trust in food systems to many more people worldwide.

Partners

Aarhus University

European Food Information Council

KU Leuven

University of Warsaw

Funders

EIT Food

"The EIT Food Trust Report shows that there are clear opportunities for the food industry to demonstrate how it is acting in the public interest and meet consumer demand regarding health and sustainability."

Professor Klaus Grunert, Department of Management,
Aarhus University

Judges' comment

"A novel and clearly effective large-scale project with demonstrable reach through media engagement, expansion to other countries around the world and integration into industry practice."



Serving and protecting, everyone

Inspiring buy-in towards inclusion in UK policing:
Listening and motivational principles put to practice

**Netta Weinstein, Maya Al-Khouja, Florencia Santana (Hampshire Constabulary),
Nicole Legate (Illinois Institute of Technology)**

A fresh, evidence-based take on police diversity and inclusion training is tackling prejudice at its root, exploring what motivates staff to change their views and prompting open conversations and understanding. A testament to the project's success, it has inspired thousands of police officers and staff.

The thorny problem of prejudice in policing affects staff wellbeing and undermines public trust. Police forces are trying hard to tackle it within their ranks, but have few research-informed tools to do so.

Reading Professor of Psychology Netta Weinstein has gathered data from police

forces to discover what motivates officers to change their views. Armed with the evidence, she worked with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary to develop the first evidence-based police training programme on inclusion, drawing on behaviour change science. It includes strategies, conversation prompts and education which motivate staff to care about diversity and inclusion in ways that are meaningful to them, helping them to align their values with inclusion.

Reviews from the 3,300 course attendees have been glowing. Almost 90% agreed that the content was engaging and that they'd learned new and useful things; 95.6% felt that trainers had tried hard to understand them; and 98.9% agreed that they were free to talk openly about their true feelings.

Weinstein's findings fed into the first UK policing national wellbeing report, nationally distributed by the College of Policing. Her research has appeared in high profile international journals, bringing the approach to wider audiences.

Partners

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary
Inclusion Matters team

Funders

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary
University of Reading Rapid Response Scheme

"A really engaging and interactive session. Pushed us all to have challenging conversations and promoted discussion. Was non-judgemental and allow us to express opinions."

Course participant

Judges' comment

"A very timely topic and an excellent project spanning several years of work that has showed great success and strong scope for future multiplication of benefits."



“ The University of Reading’s research community is committed to engaging with public and professional audiences to ensure our research contributes to global debates and benefits the economic and social life of Reading and beyond. ”

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