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CEO Connected Places Catapult  
Keynote speaker

POST-EVENT REPORT

# RIR SHOWCASE '26

**10TH-11TH MARCH 2026, MANCHESTER**

From insightful talks and live demonstrations to meaningful conversations and new connections, the Showcase highlighted the incredible potential of the Researcher in Residence scheme.



**ANDREW PARRY**  
 Department for Business and Trade  
 Keynote speaker

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## INTRODUCTION

The Researchers in Residence (RiR) Showcase 2026, held in Manchester on 10th-11th March, brought together over 100 delegates for a dynamic two-day event hosted by the Innovation Launchpad Network+. The Showcase convened researchers, Catapult leaders, funders, policymakers and industry partners from across the

UK to celebrate the achievements of the RiR scheme and explore the future of collaborative innovation.

Across the two days, attendees heard from Researchers in Residence working across three thematic areas: Net Zero, Resilience, and Health & Wellbeing. The programme featured a mix of in-depth technical presentations, flash

talks, and live demonstrations that showcased the real-world impact of RiR projects across the Catapult Network. The event featured a distinguished line-up of keynote speakers, including **Steve Bagshaw CBE**, Chair of the High Value Manufacturing Catapult, who shared insights on strengthening the UK's innovation system through collaboration between industry, Catapults and academia. **Erika Lewis**, CEO of Connected Places Catapult, highlighted the importance of place-based innovation and systems

thinking, while **Andrew Parry** from the Department for Business and Trade provided a policy perspective on the UK's industrial strategy and the role of innovation in driving growth. **Dr Anke Davis** from EPSRC reflected on the importance of translational research and the role of funding in enabling impactful collaboration, and **Jamie McGourlay** from Rolls-Royce offered an industry perspective on how partnerships between academia, Catapults and major organisations can accelerate innovation at scale.



# RIR SHOWCASE OVERVIEW

## WHAT HAPPENED AT THE EVENT

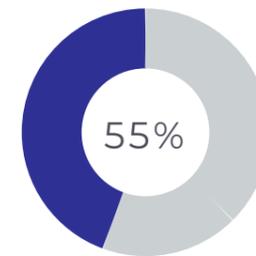
**The RiR Showcase 2026 brought together a vibrant mix of researchers, Catapult colleagues, industry partners and funders for two days of insight, collaboration and knowledge exchange.**

A key highlight of the event was the breadth and quality of presentations from Researchers in Residence. The programme featured a series of engaging flash presentations, with speakers including Maurizio Collu, Ketan Pancholi, Jasim Uddin, Zekai Murat, Greg de Boer, Nicolo Grilli, Astrid Werkmeister, Ling Wang, Ben Xu and Laurence Stamford. These concise sessions provided a dynamic overview of cutting-edge work taking place across the network. This was complemented by a strong set of technical presentations, where researchers shared deeper insights into their projects and collaborations with Catapult centres. Contributions from speakers including Matthew Unthank, Andrew Ross Wilson, Ye Yuan, Viktor Doychinov, Morteza Tabatabaeipour, Andrew Newton, James Griffin, Robin Curtis, Libby Duignan, Tom Harvey (on behalf of Daniel Simon and Junming Zheng), Michael Johnson, Tahsin Opoz, Yi Liu, Sourabh Supaneka (on behalf of Hector Basoalto), Luke Driver (on behalf of Andrew Shires), Wrik Mallik, Adam Stock, Carolina Font Palma and Rebecca Advani (on behalf of) Dawei Wu highlighted both the technical depth and

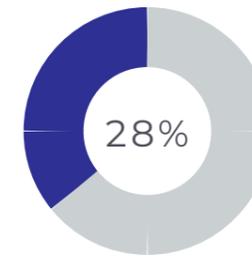
real-world relevance of the RiR programme. Notably, Libby Duignan's journey from RiR secondment into a full-time role demonstrated the scheme's ability to create tangible career opportunities and strengthen links between academia and industry. Similarly, Beattie Melinek, now CEO of spin-out company Newcleic, shared her journey from RiR to commercial leadership, underlining the programme's role in supporting entrepreneurship and innovation. Alongside the formal programme, the Showcase placed a strong emphasis on networking and collaboration, with extended breaks and informal sessions enabling meaningful conversations across sectors. These interactions were central to the event, helping to build new relationships and reinforce the value of the community. The event also featured a distinguished line-up of keynote speakers, including Steve Bagshaw CBE, Erika Lewis, Dr Anke Davis, Jamie McGourlay, and Andrew Parry, who provided strategic perspectives from across industry, policy and the Catapult Network. Funded by EPSRC and supported by Innovate UK and the Catapult Network, the RiR scheme continues to demonstrate its value in translating academic excellence into practical, scalable solutions for industry, with growing momentum across all nine Catapults.

## RIR SHOWCASE '25

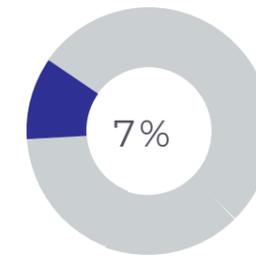
Attendees by the numbers.



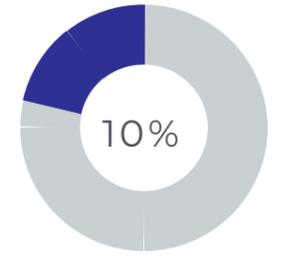
RIRS



CATAPULT  
STAFF



FUNDING  
COUNCIL



ACADEMIA  
+  
INDUSTRY







## A WORD FROM THE ILN+ TEAM

DIRECTOR PETE OSBORNE

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the Researcher in Residence Showcase 2026. What began as a one-day event has now grown into a two-day national showcase, reflecting both the scale of the programme and the strength of the community behind it. It was an inspiring and energising event, and I'm incredibly proud of the work our network continues to deliver. Across all three themes - Net Zero, Resilience, and Health & Wellbeing - our Researchers in Residence demonstrated the real-world impact that's possible when academia and industry come together. The projects on show were thoughtful, innovative and solution-focused, and it was a privilege to witness the depth of expertise across the many presentations, posters and demonstrations. It was fantastic to see new connections forming across universities,

Catapults, industry and government. We were also honoured to be joined by keynote speakers from across the Catapult Network, EPSRC, Innovate UK, Rolls-Royce and the Department for Business and Trade. Their insights reinforced the importance of collaboration in translating research into real world impact and shaping the UK's innovation ecosystem. The Innovation Launchpad Network+ was established to unlock new pathways between academia and the Catapult Network, and thanks to your continued participation and support, that vision is becoming a reality. We remain particularly grateful to EPSRC for their ongoing support, which has enabled more than 100 Researchers in Residence to deliver impactful work across all nine Catapults.



JAMIE MCGOURLAY  
Rolls-Royce  
Keynote speaker



STEVE BAGSHAW CBE  
HVM Catapult  
Keynote speaker  
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DR. ANKE DAVIS  
EPSRC  
Keynote speaker

# THANK YOU

To the stars of the show, the Researchers in Residence for showcasing their exceptional work.

