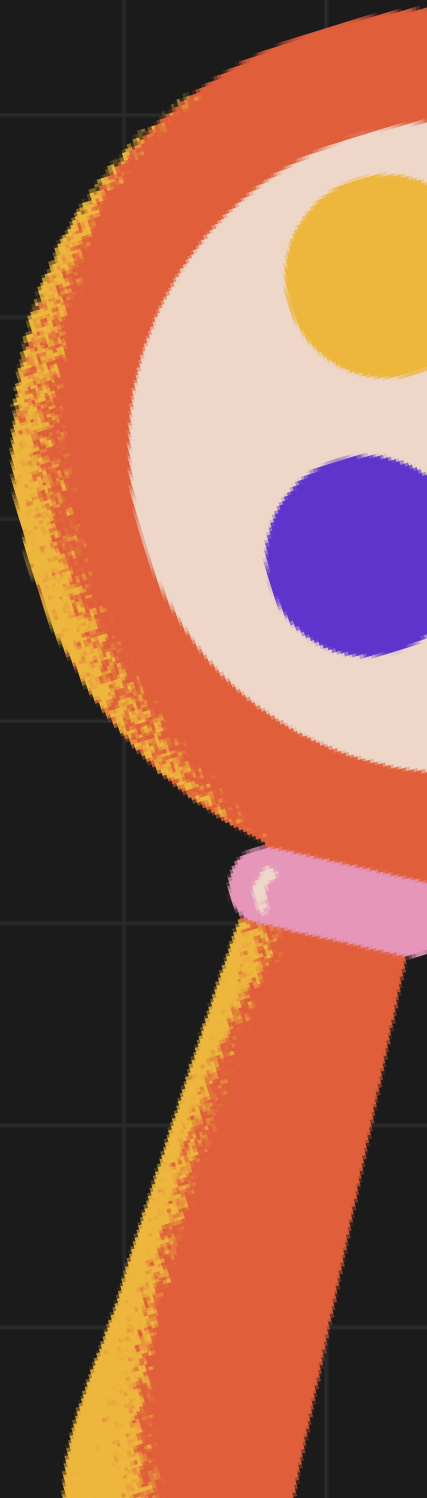
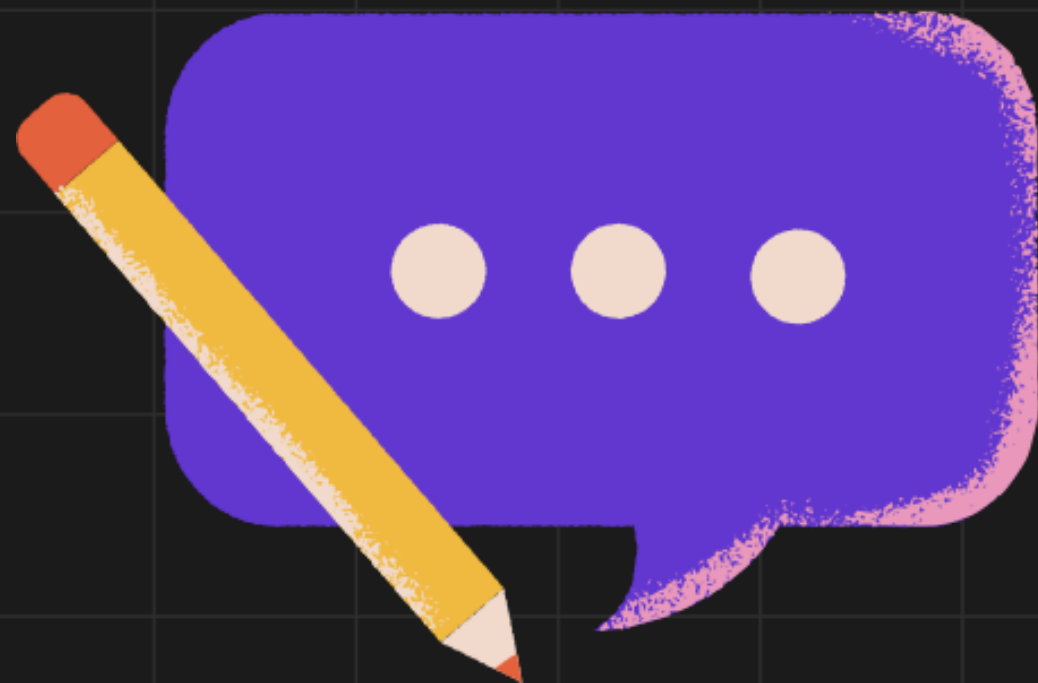
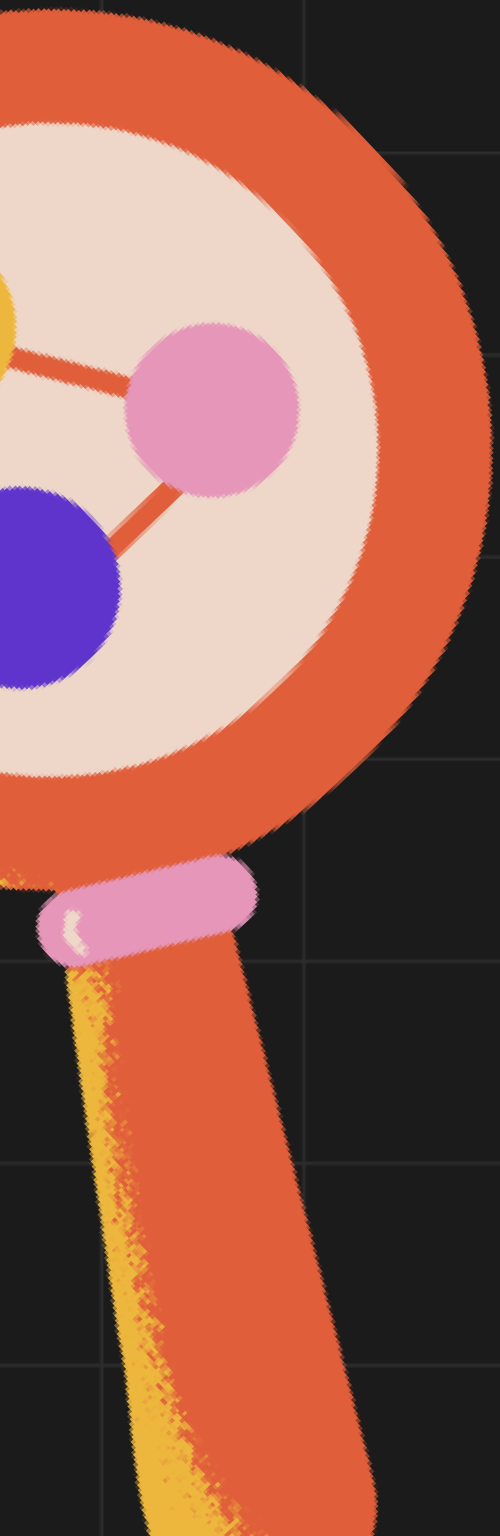


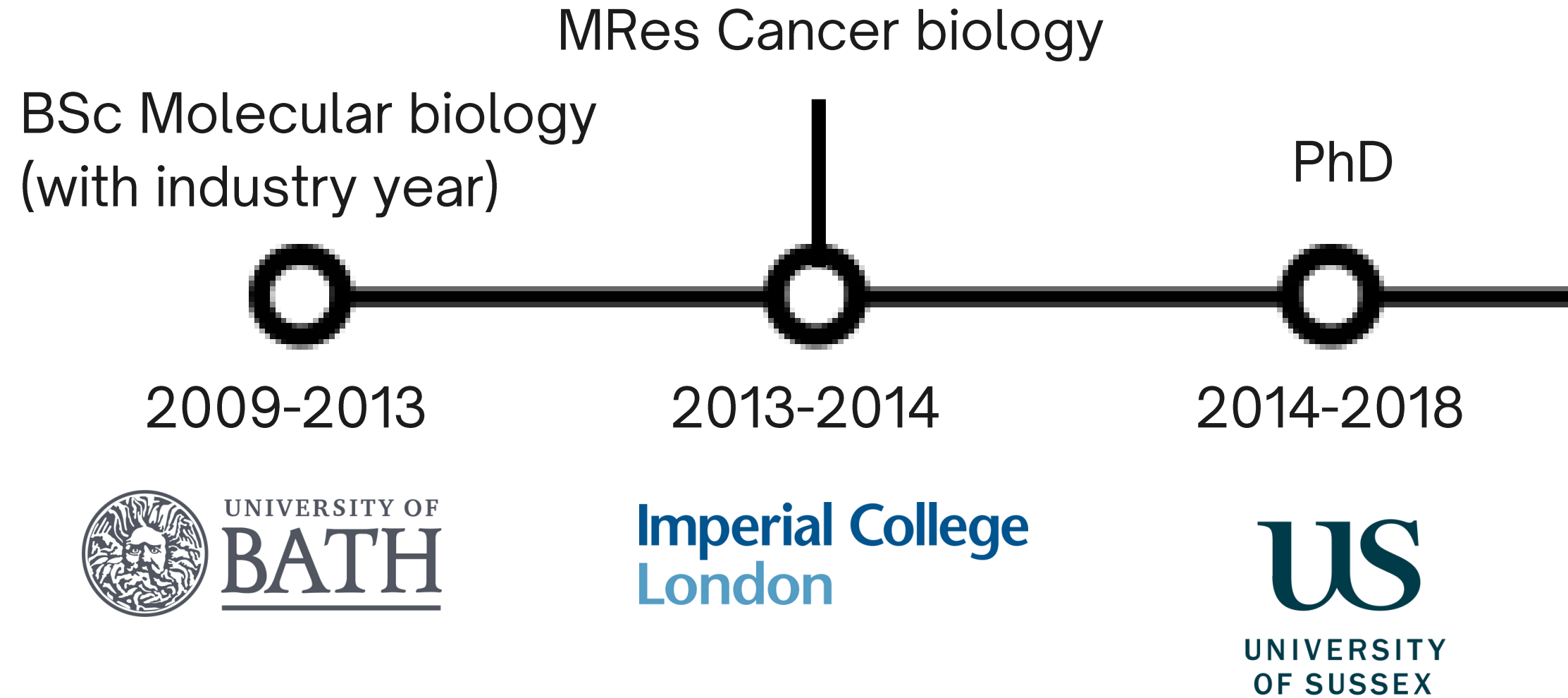
CAREERS IN SCIENCE COMMUNICATION:

working in the charity sector

Aimee Eckert, PhD



EDUCATION

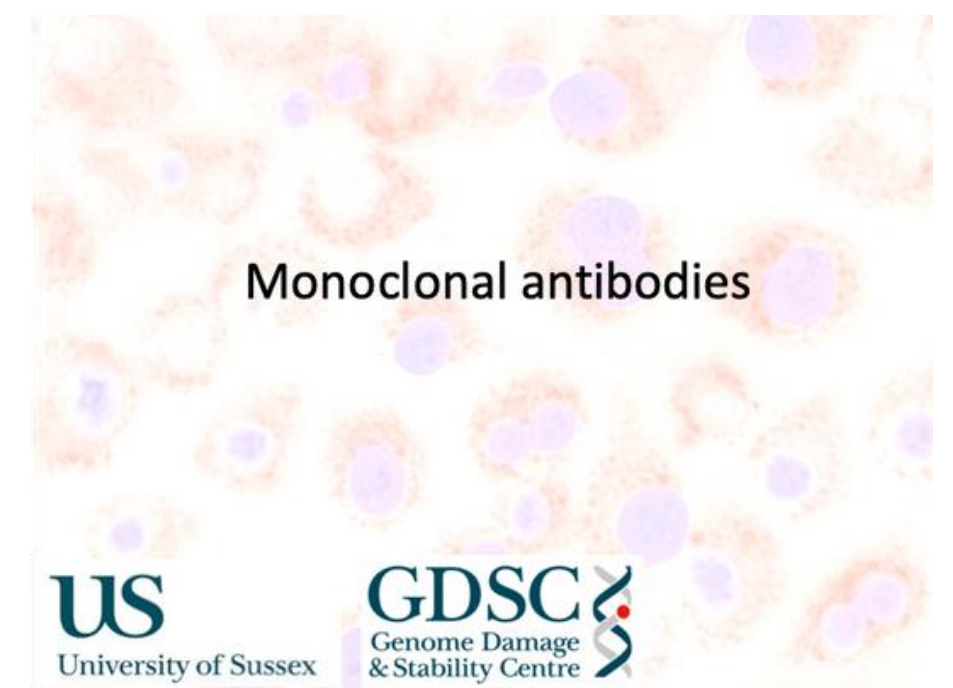
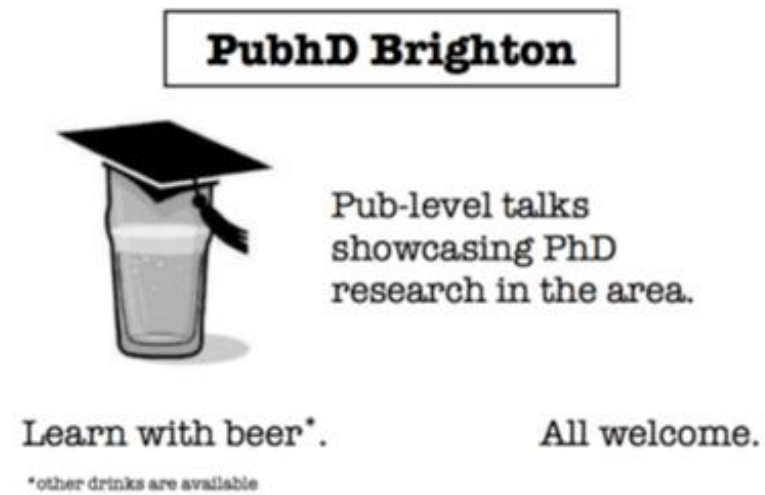


University is a great time to:

- **Try grassroots activities**
- **Volunteer**
- **Find out what you do (and don't) enjoy**

GETTING EXPERIENCE

- Co-hosting lab tours
- British Science Association
- STEM Ambassador (STEMNET)
- Science festivals
- DIY initiatives e.g. PubhD
- Science Showoff



CAREER PATH

Senior Research
Comms Officer -
Breast Cancer Now

2019-2024

Fundraising
and
freelance

2024/25

Research Advisor -
British Heart Foundation

2025-



British Heart
Foundation

MARTINGALE
POSTGRADUATE FOUNDATION

BREAST
CANCER
NOW The research &
support charity

Marylebone
Project

School Health Pulse
Bite-sized, school-focused, health research.

WORKING IN CHARITY RESEARCH COMMS

- **Writing funding proposals and bespoke research updates for high-level donors - philanthropic and corporate**
- **Providing research content for the website and social media**
- **Working with the PR and digital teams to publicise research - both newly-funded projects and the latest discoveries**
- **Delivering talks and training about research for staff, supporters, and volunteers**
- **Demonstrating science activities at events to communicate research concepts in fun and interactive ways**
- **Attending conferences to keep up to date on the field**



WORKING IN CHARITY RESEARCH COMMS

- **Getting to know a diverse range of research projects, and devising ways to communicate them clearly and with impact, is very enjoyable**
- **Opportunities to be creative and problem-solve**
- **You meet amazing people - from volunteers to researchers**
- **Some UK or even international travel possible**



WORKING IN CHARITY RESEARCH COMMS

- Depending on your organisation - the pace of the workload can vary dramatically
- For example if you are in a large charity, you may need to account for multiple layers of sign-off
- Research takes a long time, and updates from researchers usually happen once a year
- The research is often many years away from reaching people

The good news is there are ways to tackle this :)



RESEARCH VS RESEARCH COMMMS

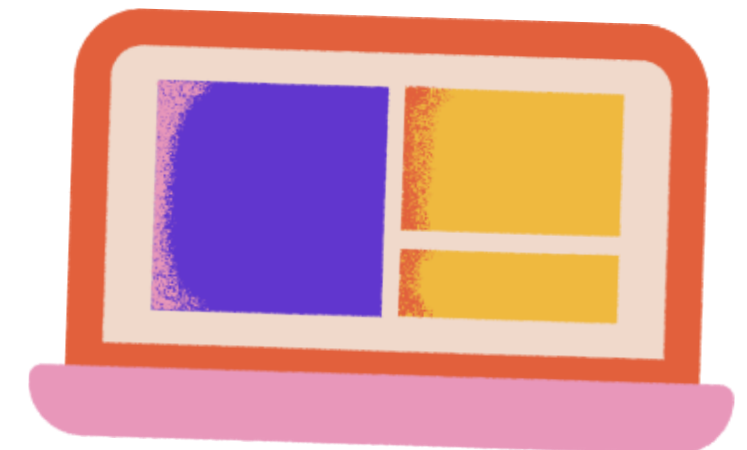
The research grants/programmes team ensures that:

- The charity has an active, ethical research portfolio that has patient and public benefit at its heart



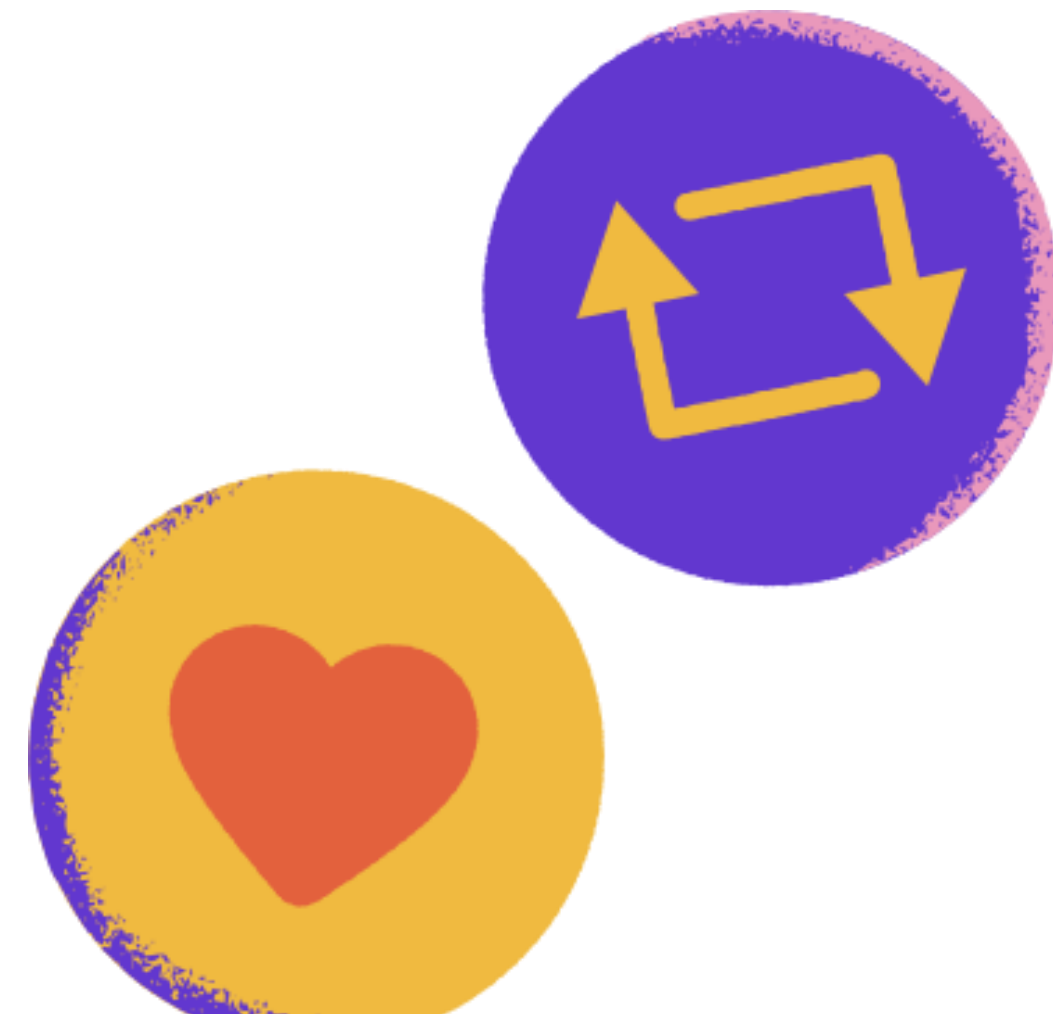
The research communications team ensures that:

- This research is being shared and communicated well: accurate, accessible, and engaging; using appropriate platforms/methods



WHY WORK IN CHARITY SECTOR?

- **The UK has a large network of health and medical research charities**
- **Rewarding - making the world better! Hopefully!**
- **Social - you get to meet lots of amazing and interesting people**
- **Interesting, creative, and fun - you're always learning**
- **Wellbeing - generally, good work/life balance and compassionate working policies**
- **Regional charities plus rise of hybrid working means you don't have to be in London**



POSSIBLE DOWNSIDES TO CONSIDER

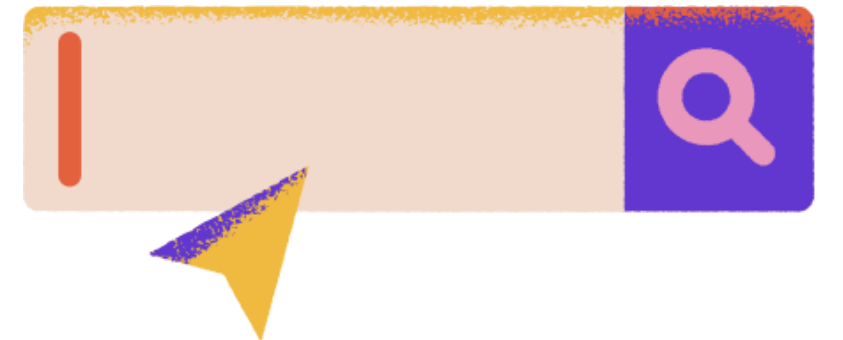
- Salaries can be low compared to corporate/pharma/government

2019 - £29k

2024 - £35k

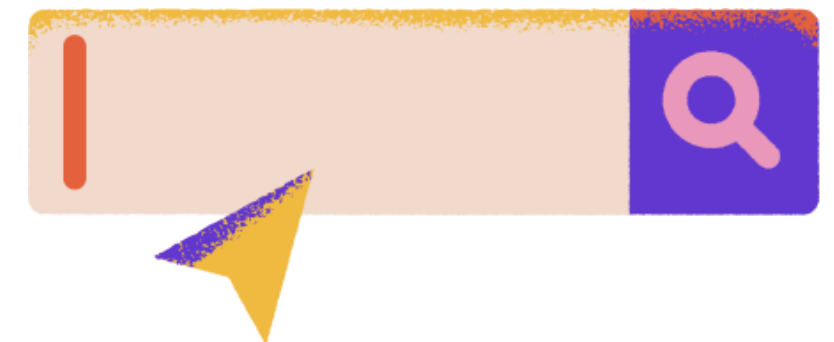
2025 - £44k

- Sometimes you can be quite siloed in your work. This is less so in smaller charities
- Changing jobs often to develop and increase salary is generally the rule
- Lack of diversity - charity sector dominated by white middle-class



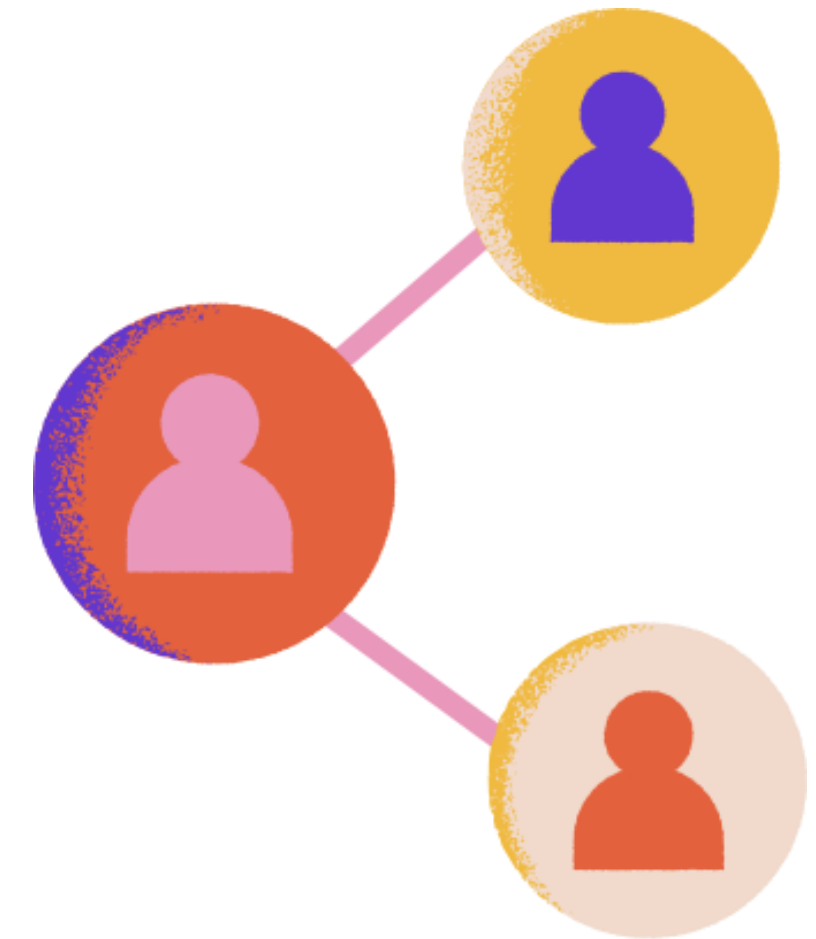
YOU'RE DOING GREAT

- **Job descriptions and person specifications use (in my opinion) intimidating words that may seem out of reach to you - e.g. strategy, stakeholder management**
- **You're probably doing these things already! It's all about framing your skills**
- **Get into the habit of noting down specific achievements and praise - so valuable for applications, interviews, and progression**



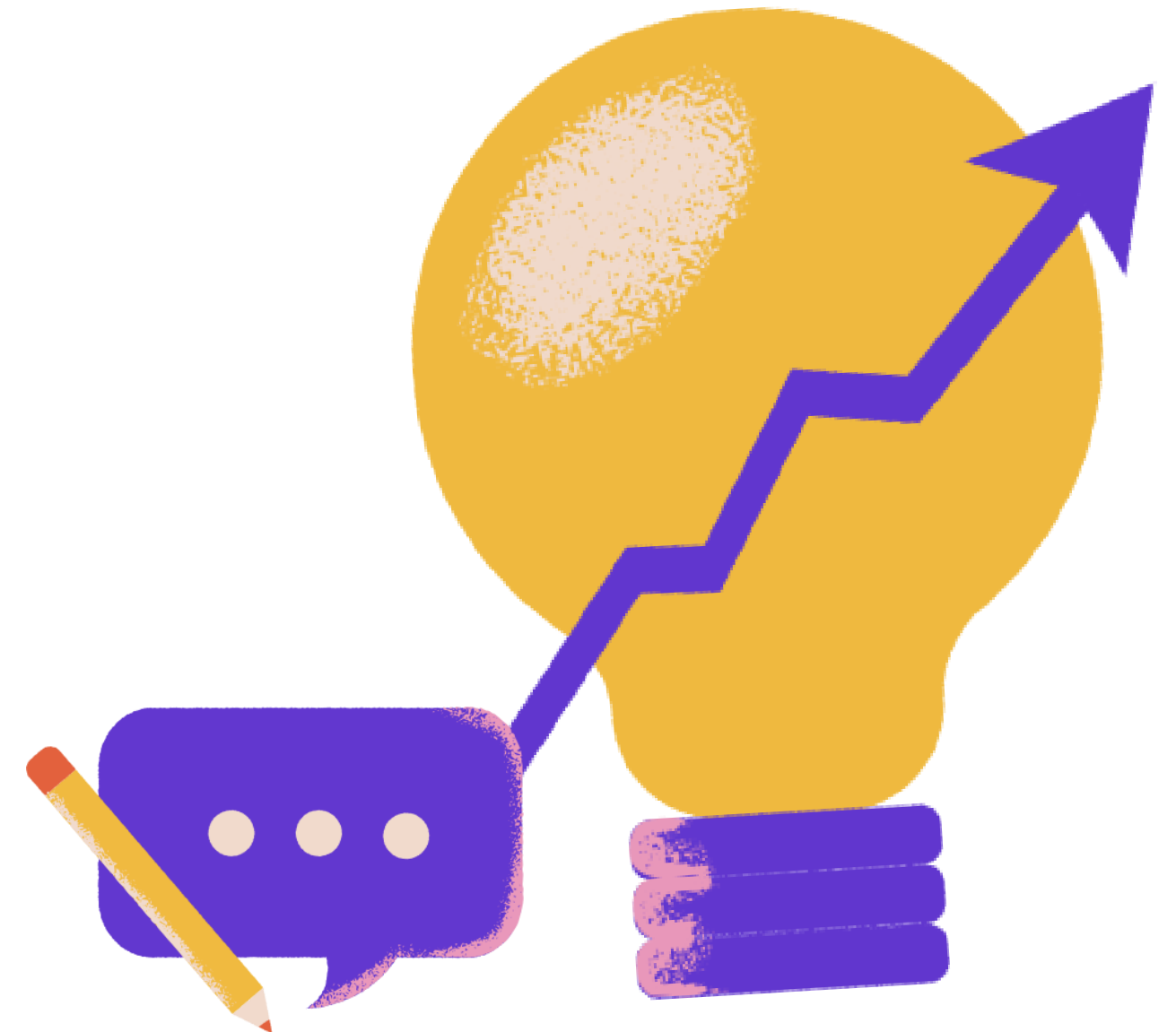
JOB HUNTING TIPS

- The website charityjob.co.uk is excellent for looking for roles in this space
- Sign up to pscicomm email blasts (daily summary option is easiest to manage) and consider a STEMPRA membership
- Volunteering and networking do help! Come to a friendly networking event with us:
<https://londonscicomm.wordpress.com/join-a-social/>



SKILLS LIST

- Readily absorbing ideas and facts
- Translating complex ideas into straightforward language
- Persuading through effective or creative writing
- Using humour to communicate or build relationships
- Facilitating the learning of others
- Conveying warmth and empathy
- Being the public representative of an organisation
- Being aware of others' feelings
- Actively listening, assessing needs
- Planning/anticipating
- Managing knowledge or information
- Following instructions, diagrams, focusing on detail
- Researching a topic thoroughly
- Problem solving/troubleshooting
- Developing and building on the ideas of others
- Making connections, seeing how things fit together



VALUES EXERCISE

- **Do an internet search for: core values list**
- **Choose a couple at random**
- **Go through them and take your time :)**
- **What words stand out to you? Note them down, ideally no more than 20**
- **Narrow these down to your top 10**
- **Then...whittle them down to 5! The most important things that you cannot be without!**



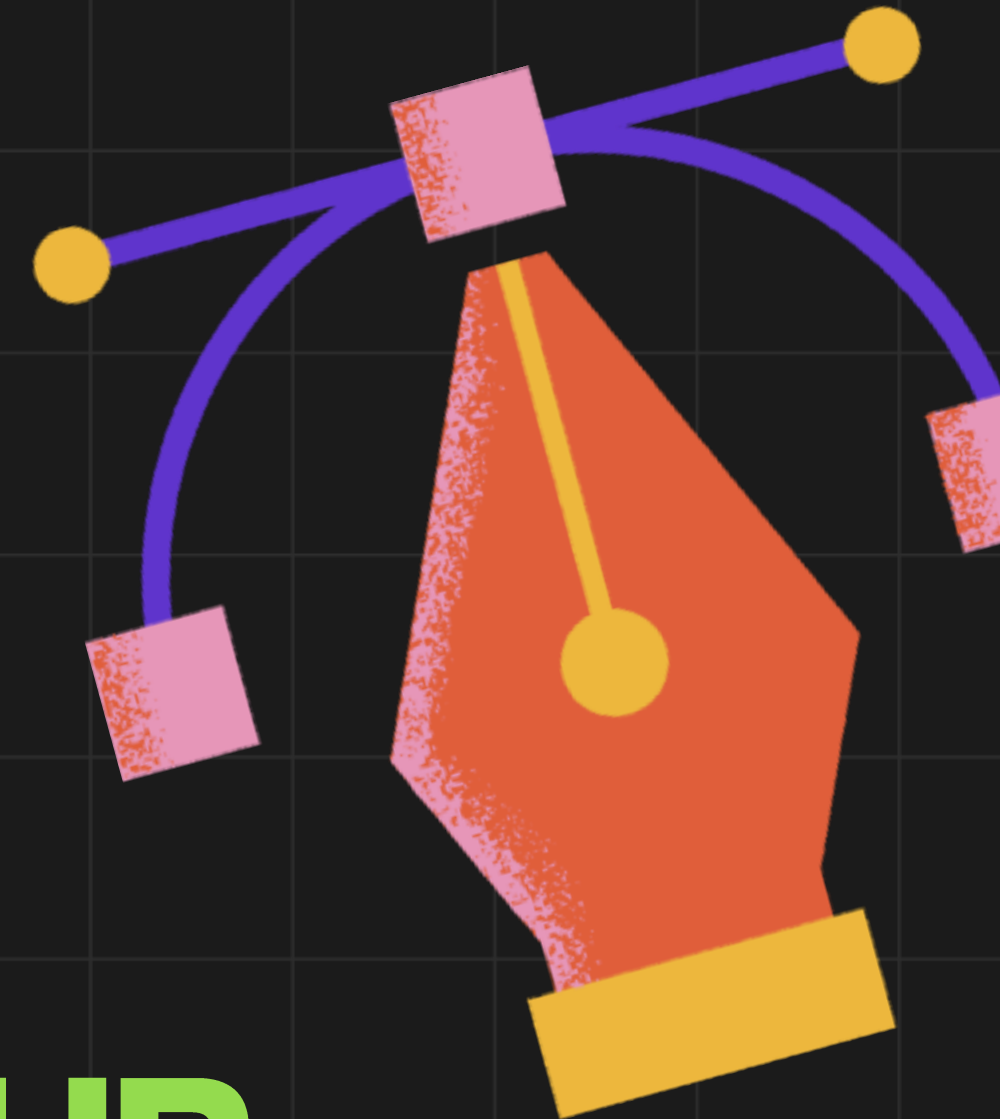
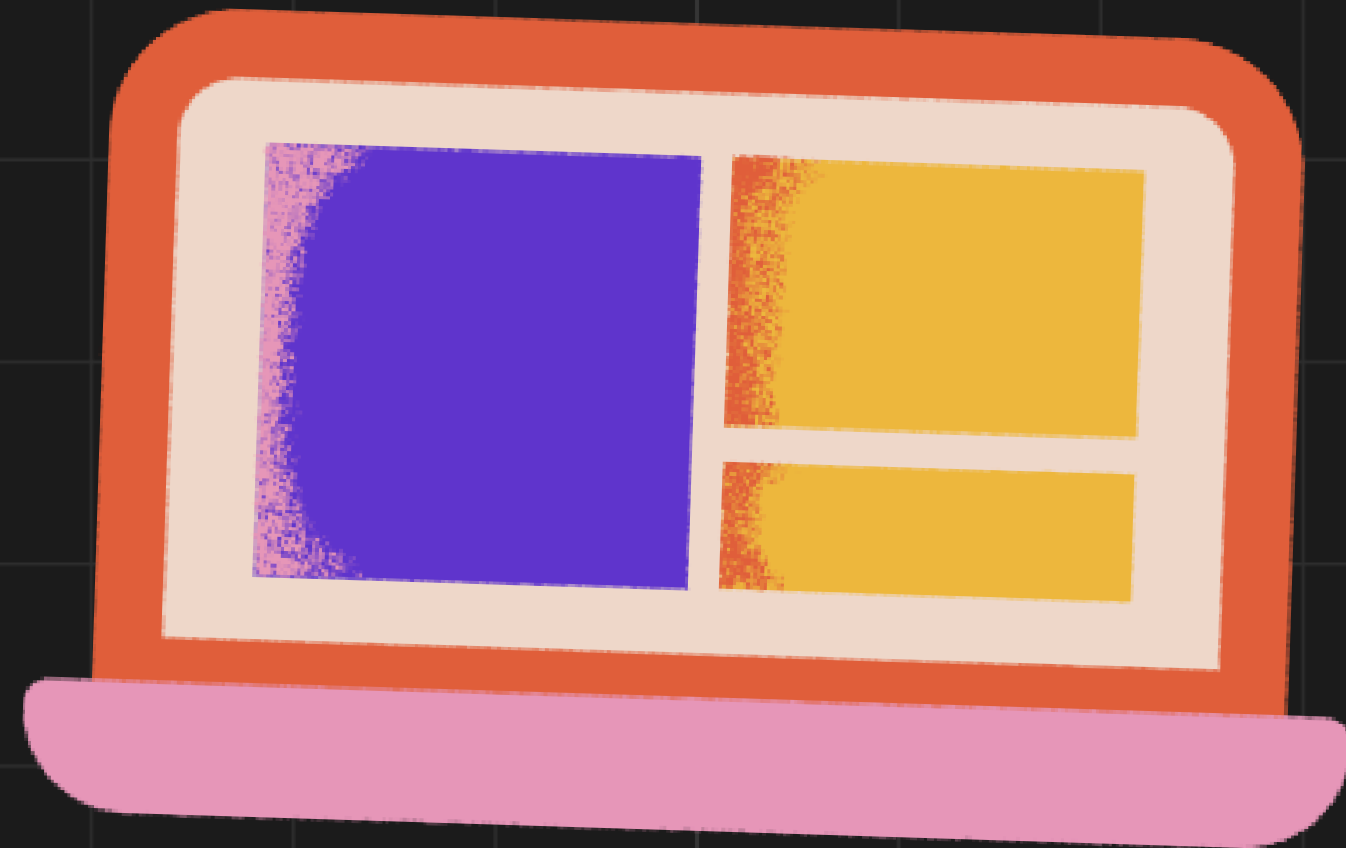
PAPERS TO PRACTICE WITH

Try writing a short summary, no more than 400 words, about one/both of these papers. Must be understandable to a non-expert

Why should a charity's supporters care about this research?

- Turrell, F.K., Orha, R., Guppy, N.J. et al. (2023) Age-associated microenvironmental changes highlight the role of PDGF-C in ER+ breast cancer metastatic relapse. *Nat Cancer* 4, 468–484 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43018-023-00525-y>
- Burzynski, L. C., Morales-Maldonado, A., Rodgers, A. et al. (2023). Thrombin-activated interleukin-1 α drives atherogenesis, but also promotes vascular smooth muscle cell proliferation and collagen production. *Cardiovascular research*, 119(12), 2179–2189. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cvr/cvad091>





**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION**