

BUAFTA winner Ben Clarke... in my own words



In 1999 I was a young undergraduate at the University of Birmingham, exploring the campus and working towards a degree in French Studies and Cultural Studies. Little did I know at the time that I would still be here over a decade later, that I would have received an amazing award, and that I would have made it to the front cover of Buzz!

I came to Birmingham especially to study at this University. I had been to school all around the UK and, for five years, in Belgium. When it came to choosing a degree I was living in Southport, and knew that I wanted to come to a big city with lots of life and lots of resources, easy access to travel to other places, and a prestigious, vibrant university. I chose Birmingham and I have never left.

After graduation I came to work at the University of Central England, which became UCE Birmingham, and then Birmingham City University. As well as generally answering student enquiries and preparing student documents, my job involved course planning and 'forecasting' placement numbers in hospitals and clinics – a tricky job and I wish my successors the best of luck. I also became involved with other aspects of the University; not least the development of the student records system. So it was only natural that when I came to work at the University of Birmingham in 2008 I took a great interest in the BIRMS student records management system.

The main part of my job is to provide administrative support in the School of Electronic, Electrical and Computer Engineering (EECE). I work in the undergraduate office and spend a lot of time talking directly to our students, answering their questions and making sure that everything to do with teaching in the school is running as it should. I organise the timetables and room bookings, maintain student records, process exam papers, coordinate postgraduate teaching assistants, put together student handbooks, assessment schedules and WebCT sections, and generally look after the teaching needs of the school.

Another big part of my job is as Teaching Operations

College Co-ordinator for Engineering and Physical Sciences. I liaise with staff in all nine of the Schools in the College, and love opportunities to work with colleagues from across the University towards a common goal. Finally, I am team leader to the wonderfully dedicated administrative staff who support teaching in EECE, Metallurgy and Materials and Railway Systems Engineering – ie, those of us who work to the north of Pritchatts Road!

In February this year I won the BUAFTA award for Best Support for Our Working Environment. I was tremendously proud to receive the award, and to receive messages of congratulation from administrative and academic colleagues and students from around the University. The whole experience of being nominated and then shortlisted for a BUAFTA award is very rewarding, discovering that people really appreciate what you do, and I have vowed to write nominations next year for staff whom I know deeply deserve the appreciation and, potentially, the award.

Something that is completely unique about me is the way my fingers and toes are not fully grown. I only found out why this is when I was a teenager! It's a phenomenon called Amniotic Band Syndrome, where tiny strings become wrapped around your arms and legs before you are born and so your fingers and toes never grow properly. It's never really affected my life or stopped me from doing anything, apart from maybe playing musical instruments like the recorder, and I have no interest in doing that! I can type as fast as anybody; and when I worked in a shop, while I was at college, I could tap in a barcode number like nobody's business! This does make me completely identifiable. On my first day at university somebody came up to me and said 'hi Ben, we went to the same school, in another country, four years ago!' He had no need to think carefully about whether the face he had seen in the crowd was the same one he knew years before in a different context – one glance at my hands and he knew for certain!

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Celebrating Staff

March 2012



Have Your Say



Profile



POD

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

YOUR BUZZ

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Front cover image: BUAFTA winner Ben Clarke, Academic Administrations Officer, School of Electronic, Electrical and Computer Engineering.

from violinist to Vice-Chancellor

In April it will be three years since Professor David Eastwood joined the University as Vice-Chancellor. Leading a campus community of 36,000 through a changing Higher Education (HE) landscape is surely no mean feat.



So who is the man behind the title and the reputation?

Kate Pritchard talks to David Eastwood about ambition, education, and family.

'Absolutely, I knew exactly what I wanted to do. I wanted to be a violinist.' An early ambition, announced to his parents at the age of three and not quite the answer I was expecting. He continued playing the violin through his school years until he discovered, during the fifth form, that although he was good, he wasn't quite good enough.

Inspired and encouraged by his Head of History, who believed he had a natural talent, he decided to go to Oxford to read history. *'When I was 16 two things happened: one was realising I wasn't going to be a great violinist and the other was a classic example of a brilliant teacher who excited me and set me on my way.'*

David's parents encouraged his ambition. Both had tough, but loving, upbringings. His father's parents were both weavers and lost their jobs in the depression. His mother lost her parents by the age of ten. They both went on to become school teachers and were delighted when he got a place at Oxford. He has fond memories of a strong and

supportive family, and a father who was *'very widely read and interested in intellectual conversations'*.

An Oxford undergraduate

So, as an undergraduate at Oxford, what was he like? *'I suppose I would have been described as a good student. I was very fortunate in that I was part of an exceptional year at St Peter's and it was a hugely exciting group to be part of. We spent a lot of time talking about history but we spent a lot of time talking about different things. It was that classic university education where you have brilliant teachers, you have excellent resources but you also challenge and educate one another.'*

Active in student politics, music, and sport he went on to achieve a first which, at this point, the late 1970s, was important. Money was starting to become more of an issue especially if you wanted to go on and do research, which he did. By this time he had become increasingly interested in the writing of history and

an academic career beckoned.

Yet Oxford gave him, perhaps, his greatest gift. It was in his second year that he met his wife, Jan. They married the day after his finals results came out, when he was just 21. A successful marriage I ask? Laughing loudly he tells me *'Well we think so!'*

An academic historian

The Oxford connection continued into the mid 1990s and beyond. He became a Fellow at two Colleges (Keble and Pembroke), Senior Tutor at Pembroke, and is currently an Honorary Fellow at St Peter's and Keble. Oxford must have been a significant influence both professionally and personally? *'It is very important. It was where I trained as a historian and where I did most of my teaching. It influenced me in all sorts of ways. It's one of the reasons why I've always thought that teaching and research complement each other as I worked in an environment that took excellence in both very seriously.'*

However, the journey at Oxford was not effortless. *'I was making my way as an academic in the 1980s and if you were in a humanities subject it was a very difficult time. There were lots of very*

young, talented academics who didn't make it' he remembers.

'It also started the other phase of my career in academic leadership because it was at Oxford that I came to the conclusion that academic institutions should be led by academics, but they should be led well by academics.'

An academic leader

So when did he decide to run a university? *'I didn't,'* he tells me. *'For a while I decided that I wanted to combine being an acting academic, publishing, teaching and having major leadership roles and that continued when I went to Swansea (University of Wales). I became Professor of History, Head of Department and Dean of Faculty. At one point I was Head of two Departments and Dean of Faculty simultaneously and then I became Pro-Vice-Chancellor, and that was the end of me applying for jobs and it was the beginning of head-hunters.'*

It was head-hunters that led him to his next roles: Chief Executive at the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB), Vice-Chancellor at the University of East Anglia (UEA), and Chief Executive of the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE). *'I think, looking back,*

it was going to run AHRB that put me firmly on the track of academic leadership and then the logical thing to do was to try to become a Vice-Chancellor. I think it was sometime in the late 1990s that I began to wonder whether the trajectory might result in my leading a university.'

A university leader

Is running a university a difficult role?

'Yes, objectively I think it is. It is an all consuming role so I often say you don't have another life, which is not wholly true, but I'm doing things for the University, morning, noon and night. You've got to get your energy and excitement from doing the job. It's hugely intellectually challenging. People think you've stopped being an academic, you've stopped being an intellectual because you've become a Vice-Chancellor; but that is actually to misunderstand it. You use your mind in a different way but the challenges you face leading a university are intellectually as challenging as the challenges you face when you are a researcher. I think what we now have at somewhere like Birmingham is the massive complexity of the role, the massive complexity of the challenges you face.'



the buzz interview



continued from page 3

One of the challenges faced by leaders in any sector is the current focus on their value. News reports frequently carry reference to pay, bonuses, and performance, and people are, ever more, challenging the value of leadership. **Does he feel this pressure?** 'Yes, I think you'd be naive if you didn't see what's happening but if you're doing a job like this, you've got to accept that there is going to be criticism and scepticism, it comes with the territory.'

He finds it interesting that the focus on pay is on a narrow group of people, not the entertainers or footballers who are paid stratospheric amounts of money, but the people who are paid a lot less and who, arguably, do more responsible jobs.

The comments do affect other areas of his life. 'It is horrible for your family, the people who criticise you don't realise that, but your children find it really difficult so you can't be indifferent to it, but you have to get on with the job.'

The part of the job he enjoys most is creating, or helping to create situations, where people can succeed but whilst he is exhilarated by the range, diversity and pace of the role, there is sacrifice. 'There are parts of the role which are quite lonely,' he tells me.

The life plan
From aspiring violinist to academic historian to academic leader, was there a plan? 'I wanted to be known as a serious and highly credible researcher and I wanted to balance that with a reputation as a fine teacher and a fine supervisor of research. It was in the 1990s that I started to think about academic leadership but I think you have to be very careful developing and having a career plan because things might not go according to plan. I often say to people who have ambitions to do something else that the most important thing is to do your current job well.'

Although fortunate in his career, during the 1980s he had a major road accident. After being told he was likely to be in a wheelchair by the time he was 40, doctors admitted that they initially thought he

wouldn't walk again. He had to adjust from life as an able bodied person to life as a disabled person. **A huge challenge for anyone, how did he manage?** 'I had to learn to cope; living with constant pain relies on a certain kind of resilience. It isn't something I try and draw attention to so, for example, when I'm here at work I don't use walking sticks but at the weekend when I'm out I may walk with two sticks. People are easily disconcerted by that so I try not to complicate relationships by drawing attention to it.'

A high profile
David has drawn attention as, arguably, one of the country's more high profile Vice-Chancellors. He has served on a number of national bodies and committees and was a member of the Independent Review Panel looking at Higher Education Funding and Student Finance. Is that good for Birmingham? 'This is a high profile university. Universities are constantly competing for reputation and for airtime, and so having a respected, high profile Vice-Chancellor helps further raise the profile of the University.'

He uses his profile and contacts to help build networks for others in the University and is well informed; privy to political and policy intelligence around HE. 'It does help the university I'm there where key decisions are made, I'm listened to and I can help influence policy.'

Family matters
Married to Jan for over thirty years, I wonder how she would describe him. 'Well you ought to email her and ask the question,' he tells me. 'I suppose there is a serious point in that she would say that if you get married relatively young the marriage has to evolve and develop. She didn't think she was going to marry a Vice-Chancellor or someone with a high public profile, and she didn't think she was going to marry someone who was going to be smashed up spectacularly in a road accident. Things thereafter would be quite different from what they had been in the

first seven years of our marriage.'

He recognises that he couldn't have done what he has if he hadn't had the support from Jan and the family. 'We're a close family and she's had the principal responsibility for shaping the family, though she has had her own career as well.'

Their three children have all graduated from university (UEA, Manchester and Sheffield Hallam). His eldest, Miriam, went to UEA at exactly the point he became their Vice-Chancellor and the family joke is that she got her offer before he did. 'She tells a story that she was chatting in the bar at the end of her first year and someone said "Mim, you haven't said what your dad does" and she said "well he's the Vice-Chancellor" and they said "Oh Mim, you're drunk!"' he laughs. He remembers fondly that, at the end of her time at UEA, he graduated her with a kiss.

He also has his children to thank for an interesting Christmas present: a Thunderbirds lunchbox, which he proudly shows me. Rumour has it you might spot him carrying it on campus.

The Future
As an academic historian does he think, within HE, we are living through a period where, if we look back in five years time, it will have been the point where everything changed forever? 'I think historians always play around with themes of change and continuity, and there's often more continuity than people think,' he comments. 'However, it is a period of profound and rapid change and some universities will be extraordinarily challenged over the next few years.'

Will we be one of them? 'For us as a university it is important that we take charge of our destiny, that we don't allow ourselves to be buffeted by external circumstances and that we have the confidence to chart and follow our own course, changing here and there as circumstances require, but not just allowing the winds to blow us one way or another.'

Simplythebest

Bryoney Johnson learns more about the Birmingham Fellows scheme and meets some of the outstanding early-career researchers who have already become an integral part of the University.

Buzz is delighted to welcome the arrival of the first of our Birmingham Fellows. These post-doctoral researchers, recruited from around the world, are beginning to establish their academic careers at Birmingham via the Fellows scheme. Their focus will be on a range of priority areas from Europe to Environmental Pollution and from History to High Energy Physics.

The scheme was started to recruit post-doctoral researchers of the very highest calibre, and shows the University's commitment to attracting, and supporting, the brightest and the best. Almost 1,400 applications were received for the first round of recruitment, with interest from local, national, and international candidates.

'The number of applications we received far exceeded our expectations, and the calibre of candidates was truly outstanding' says Professor Adam Tickell, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Transfer.

Holding five-year appointments, Fellows will be given time and support to engage in serious research, with a permanent post being offered to all who perform to agreed expectations. Fellows are also appointed to research and teaching contracts, reflecting the University's commitment to teaching as an integral part of an academic career. All Fellows will receive extensive mentoring and development support throughout their Fellowship.

Meet more of our 2011 Birmingham Fellows at www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/excellence/fellows/2011/index.aspx.

The University will launch another recruitment round in summer 2012 and will consider candidates under the Fast Track scheme at any time. For further information please email birminghamfellows@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

The great success of the scheme was recognised at the 2012 BUAFAs ceremony, where the Birmingham Fellows team received the Vice-Chancellor's award. 'The team were up against some fantastic competition, so when we found out we had won we were ecstatic,' says Geeta Parashar, Project Manager Human Resources, and member of the Birmingham Fellows Team.

Meet our Fellows

Over thirty Birmingham Fellows joined the University in 2011, including Sara Jones. Sara tells Buzz more about her research and experience of the Birmingham Fellows scheme.

'I completed my PhD, focusing on the cultural politics of East Germany, at the University of Nottingham in 2008. After ten months as a Teaching Fellow at the University of Bath, I was awarded a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship for my current project, which analyses cultural representations of the East German State Security Service (Stasi). I completed the first two years of my fellowship at the University of Bristol before taking up a Birmingham Fellowship in September 2011, bringing the final

year of Leverhulme funding with me.

I was appointed cross-College to the Department of Political Science and International Studies, and the Department of Modern Languages, reflecting the truly interdisciplinary nature of my work. In the last five years, I have published a monograph, an edited volume, four articles in peer-reviewed journals, and five book chapters. My next proposed project examines the experiences of Eastern European migrants, living in the Birmingham area, who have memories of state socialism. This will combine text-based methodologies developed in the Arts and Humanities with Social Science interview and participant observation techniques.

The last six months in Birmingham have been both challenging and exciting.

I am relishing the opportunity to take on new roles within both Colleges and to develop as a rounded academic, including as a teacher, whilst still having time for my research. I am especially enjoying the chance to work in a properly interdisciplinary way, and to benefit from the expertise of colleagues with such a variety of research experience. It is perhaps one of the greatest advantages of the Birmingham Fellows scheme that it allows people the space to explore new research avenues within their particular theme, which might cross traditional disciplinary boundaries.'





Actions, achievements and next steps



Martin Stringer

Martin Stringer, Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Chair of the Staff Survey Action Planning Group

It is now almost a year since the 2011 Staff Survey was conducted. It was our aim to communicate results, and to begin developing appropriate action plans as quickly as possible. In order to make the most of the information we received within the survey it is important that colleagues at all levels of the University reflect on these results and set out the actions they can take, either to celebrate successes or to improve those areas where concerns remain.

I am pleased to say that the whole University has engaged positively in this process, and each School, College, and section of Corporate Services have produced their own action plans and begun to make a difference. It is the job of the University Staff Survey Action Planning Group to oversee this process, to share good practice and to monitor the results. Some very exciting initiatives have already been put in place; some of which are reported on within this edition of BUZZ.

We have also been able to look at the data across the University and at those issues that specifically affect different colleagues in different contexts, as well as reviewing the data against the equality and diversity

criteria. This has led to specific actions being identified, and these are being pursued by the appropriate groups.

There is, therefore, a great deal of action taking place and it is clear that much of this is already having an effect at the local level. Thanks are due to all who have been involved in this process.

One of the issues that came out from across the University related to communication, and it is very important that we not only take action to improve the working environment of our colleagues, but that we also let you know what it is that is taking place. There are communication plans, sitting alongside action plans, at all local levels and we would encourage you to ask what is happening within your specific area. This edition of BUZZ and a whole range of similar developments are also part of the wider University communications to address these issues.

Please do read all the exciting things that are happening within this issue of BUZZ and do get in touch either with myself or a local member of the staff survey action group if you have any questions. The Have Your Say survey is part of an ongoing conversation between the University and its staff and that conversation should not stop once the survey is over.

You said...we did

Directors of Operations for each of the Colleges have given an update on the activities and actions undertaken from Have Your Say survey results in their area.



Charlotte Jarvis



Marcella Keher



Gideon White



Dr Emma Robinson



Charlotte Wellington

Charlotte Jarvis, Director of Operations, College of Arts and Law

The College is monitoring progress in the delivery of action plans through termly reports to College Board. Several actions have been completed, such as devolving management of research support funds to Schools. In the autumn the College also held an event to welcome new staff and to showcase the work of some of the winners of the Awards for Teaching Excellence, and the University PG Certificate. The event centred round the theme of enquiry based learning and highlighted the importance the College attaches to teaching innovation and enhancement. In January, Team Leaders and Team Managers serving undergraduates and postgraduates from across the College got together to discuss University Strategy. This was a useful exercise which challenged everyone to see how their daily activities and demands are related to the University's strategic priorities. Managers then worked together to identify the capabilities that would be priorities for their teams in the coming year.

Marcella Keher, Director of Operations, College of Engineering and Physical Sciences

A dedicated section of the College intranet has been created to host survey reports and action plans. A great deal of work has taken place to address issues raised in the Survey; these are just a few of the initiatives. In the School of Mathematics a staff Equality and Diversity group has been set up and is already planning how to better support staff returning from maternity leave. The School of Civil Engineering has recruited four additional academic posts, addressing workload issues. Plans are being formed in Mechanical Engineering to simplify communications and avoid information overload, while in Computer Science there is now better information

provided for staff on what is happening in the College and University. In Physics and Astronomy, the Head of School has launched a series of regular 1-2-1 meetings with staff. The Head of College has also attended staff meetings in several Schools, which has been very well received by colleagues.

Gideon White, Director of Operations, College of Life and Environmental Sciences

The Survey themes for LES were engagement, leadership (specifically related to communication and cooperation across campus), work/life balance, resources, and performance feedback. For engagement, we aim to use meetings and communications to show the link between the Survey feedback and decision-making. The Head of College will continue to meet with a focus group of early and mid-career academic staff, and a small Professional Services Communications Project team is working up communications ideas for Professional Services. Focus groups will help to better understand what perceived issues are relating to communication and cooperation. Invited guest speakers to staff meetings will help to update on topics and themes of interest to staff. The Compact process captures School input and the new PDRS offers the opportunity to create linkages between the Compact and individuals. In summary, we aim to make better linkages with the Survey from what we do anyway.

Emma Robinson, Director of Operations, College of Medical and Dental Sciences

The College has held open meetings within Schools and the College Hub to discuss survey results and key themes. A College Action Planning Week was held in November 2011 to give all staff a further opportunity to directly engage with, inform

and shape the College's Action Plan. The College's Staff Survey Champions and Action Planning Groups are playing an important role in monitoring action plan progress. Individuals are also being encouraged to use established feedback systems to identify areas of good practice or actions that do not match expectations. A number of specific staff development initiatives are being implemented, including a local Birmingham Professional launch event, a College Postdoctoral Career Development Away Day and on-going progression of the Women in Academic Medicine and Science initiative. A particular focus has also been made on School and Ops Team structures and communication strategies, so that we ensure effective sharing of best practice and that we are doing as much as possible to cascade and respond to issues pertinent to MDS staff.

Charlotte Wellington, Director of Operations, College of Social Sciences

One of the major focus areas for the College of Social Sciences is wellbeing and issues of work/life balance. Accordingly, the College held its first 'mini wellbeing' day in November to raise awareness of University support in this area. Stalls included:

- **Occupational Health** – how work affects health and how health affects work
- **Health and Safety** – expert advice and guidance
- **Security** – personal safety
- **Environmental** – how to protect the environment and respond to climate change
- **POD** – career and personal development
- **Munrow Sports Centre** – benefits of exercise including Yoga at your Desk
- **University catering** – healthy eating.

In addition a Social Committee has been established to promote social activities for staff including a film club which is due to have its inaugural event shortly.



STARS OF 2012

Staff from across the University came together on 3 February to celebrate the fifth annual Birmingham University Awards for Tremendous Achievement (BUAFTAs).

Host for the evening was newsreader and University of Birmingham alumna Ellie Crisell, perhaps best known as presenter of Newsround and BBC1 live news bulletins. Attendees were greeted into the Great Hall by a Jamaican steel band and human statues, and entertainment continued throughout the ceremony with a light and dance show

and impressive Bhangra dancers.

The BUAFTA 2012 charity raffle raised over £2,000 for Sport4Life and St Mary's Hospice. Learn more about the charities and see a list of the lucky winners at www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/buافتa/raffle.shtml. For further information on BUAFTAs 2012 visit www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/buافتa.

'BUAFTAs celebrate the endeavours and achievements of our administrative, support and technical staff without whom our University would not be the flourishing, efficient, rapidly changing, beautifully clean and well cultivated place we all know it to be. The BUAFTAs remind us of the sense of community, the commitment to helping others, and the pride and dedication that, for so many of our staff, makes a job at Birmingham much more than a job.'

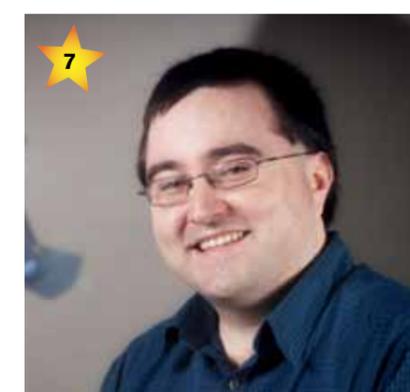
Professor Karen O'Brien,
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education,
Chair of BUAFTA 2012 judging panel

'Organising the BUAFTAs to recognise the fantastic achievements of our colleagues in Professional Services is a privilege. It is a great opportunity to organise an event for staff by staff, with so many members of Professional Services contributing to the success of the BUAFTAs.'

Charlotte Jarvis, Director of Operations
College of Arts and Law, Chair of
BUAFTA 2012 Committee

OUR 2012 BUAFTA STARS:

- 1 Idea of the Year**
Estates Office Projects and Utilities Team, Estates
- 2 Vice-Chancellor's Award**
Birmingham Fellows Team, Cross Departmental
- 3 Team of the Year**
Guangzhou Project Board and Team, Cross Departmental
- 4 The Student Experience Award**
Registration Team, Academic Services
- 5 Role Model of the Year**
Linda Wilden, PA to Professor David Eastwood, Vice-Chancellor
- 6 Best Newcomer**
Alan Hickinbotham, Assistant Fire Safety Officer, Human Resources
- 7 Best Support for our Working Environment**
Ben Clarke, Academic Administrations Officer, School of Electronic, Electrical and Computer Engineering
- 8 Team Player of the Year**
Heather Cullen, Administrator for Admissions, Recruitment and Quality Assurance, School of History and Cultures
- 9 Best Customer Service**
Gary Bailey, Primary Care Cleaner, Hospitality and Accommodation Services
- 10 Best Support for Research**
Gay Smith, Research Technician, School of Dentistry



Thanks to our BUAFTA 2012 sponsors, without their generous support the BUAFTAs would not be possible:
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Congratulations also to the following who received BUAFTA commendations:

- Estates Team ■ Wendy Allen, Receptionist, Hospitality and Accommodation Services ■ Sally Brooks, Major Gifts Manager, DARO ■ Student Mobile App Team ■ James Peart, Map Curator, School of Geography and Environmental Sciences
- Alumni Leadership Mentoring Programme

profile

Heather Paver... in my own words

Heather Paver, Director of Human Resources, has worked at the University for six years. But how did she get here? Heather describes her career journey that brought her back to the institution she graduated from nearly 25 years ago.

I graduated from the University of Birmingham with a degree in French and German. In fact it wasn't really my degree, but my extra-curricular interests that sparked an interest in HR or 'staffing' as it was called in those days. I was actively involved in student community action, running play schemes, a day centre and acting as Treasurer. It was those activities I believe that made me stand out from the crowd when I applied for a place on the Boots Graduate Training scheme.

Staff opinion surveys only happened in US companies in those days and I loved getting approval from the Board to develop Boots' first survey. I also developed what came to be called term time only contracts and a career break scheme and got a real kick out of seeing these work.

Research has shown that most successful leaders can point to someone who was prepared to take a risk on them. And that is certainly true for me. Just two years after I completed the training scheme, the Human Resources Director took a great risk in making me Head of Personnel for Small Stores, a role that put me in charge of HR for 18,000 people. It was a risk that paid off and I later successfully moved from that role to Head of HR for Boots Opticians.

It was then that I had my first son, Calum. When Calum was just four weeks old I was asked to be the General Manager HR for Halfords which was part of the Boots Group. So we moved house and I started work for a company that was losing money hand over fist, had very different brand values and a very different attitude to HR! Then, when my second son Dominic was born, I did manage to have about four months of maternity, but then became General Manager of Operations. So, out of HR and into what some would call a 'real' job, managing stores and garages and heading up back office services such as security and

cleaning. A woman, a working mum and a background in HR – I was very different and had to work really hard to be accepted, but I loved it.

From the position at Halfords I moved back into HR, becoming HR Director for RAC Rescue. RAC was emerging from 100 years as a mutual company and I was part of the team that had to get them competing in a new world of profits and productivity. Part of a close knit team, we worked long hours, travelled many miles but really got a buzz out of seeing RAC grow and win awards. Being taken over by Norwich Union is what I might call an experience and for me it presented an opportunity to take stock and think about what to do next.

So I moved to the University. An organisation with a sense of purpose, where research was making a difference in people's lives and the looks on the faces of the graduates and their families made coming into work worthwhile. To some that might sound corny, but for me it is absolutely key. HR is more critical where the business is about people and that is certainly true here. Working here brings its own challenges when HR is central to the delivery of the mission but it just seems so much more rewarding.

Looking back on a varied career, I might have done some things differently and would have taken longer maternity leave but I am a firm believer in making your own luck. Someone once said to me 'if you see an accountability gap, jump into it' and I would offer the same advice. If something needs doing, then do it. If there is a space that needs filling then fill it. Don't worry about whether you are 'only' moving sideways. If a project comes up then get on it. This is the precedent that I set myself and have had a very fulfilling and rewarding career as a result. **;**



meet the
TEAM

Who's who in HR?

In HR we look after the relationship between you and the University. Our four distinct teams work collaboratively to support your professional goals and development, as well as your wellbeing at work. We manage employment policies and conditions, staff recruitment and induction, benefits, salaries and much more. Each of the four teams is led by an Assistant Director of HR.

HR Operations Team

The HR Operations team is responsible for the delivery and co-ordination of HR processes that underpin the employment of all staff in the University from recruitment to retirement; the provision of advice and guidance to the University on employment matters; and supporting the University in the delivery of change and the achievement of its strategic plans.

Strategy and Policy Team

The Strategy and Policy team help to develop and deliver HR strategies and policies which contribute to the University's objectives, and ensure that University employment policies comply with the relevant legislation.

People and Organisational Development (POD)

POD aim to develop the capabilities and potential of every member of staff in the University through a wide range of personal, professional, leadership, and management development activities.

Workplace Wellbeing Team

The Workplace Wellbeing team have a role to play in many aspects of your working life, from the quality and safety of your physical environment, to how you feel about your work. Workplace wellbeing is further divided into four teams:

- Employee Advice and Support Services offer confidential help, support and advice to all employees.
- Health and Safety Unit supports the University in the development and implementation of University Health and Safety Policy and various statutory compliance.
- Occupational Health is concerned with how your work affects your health, and how your health affects your work.
- Sustainability and Environment is heavily involved in the University's work to protect the environment and respond to climate change.



Heather Paver
Director of HR



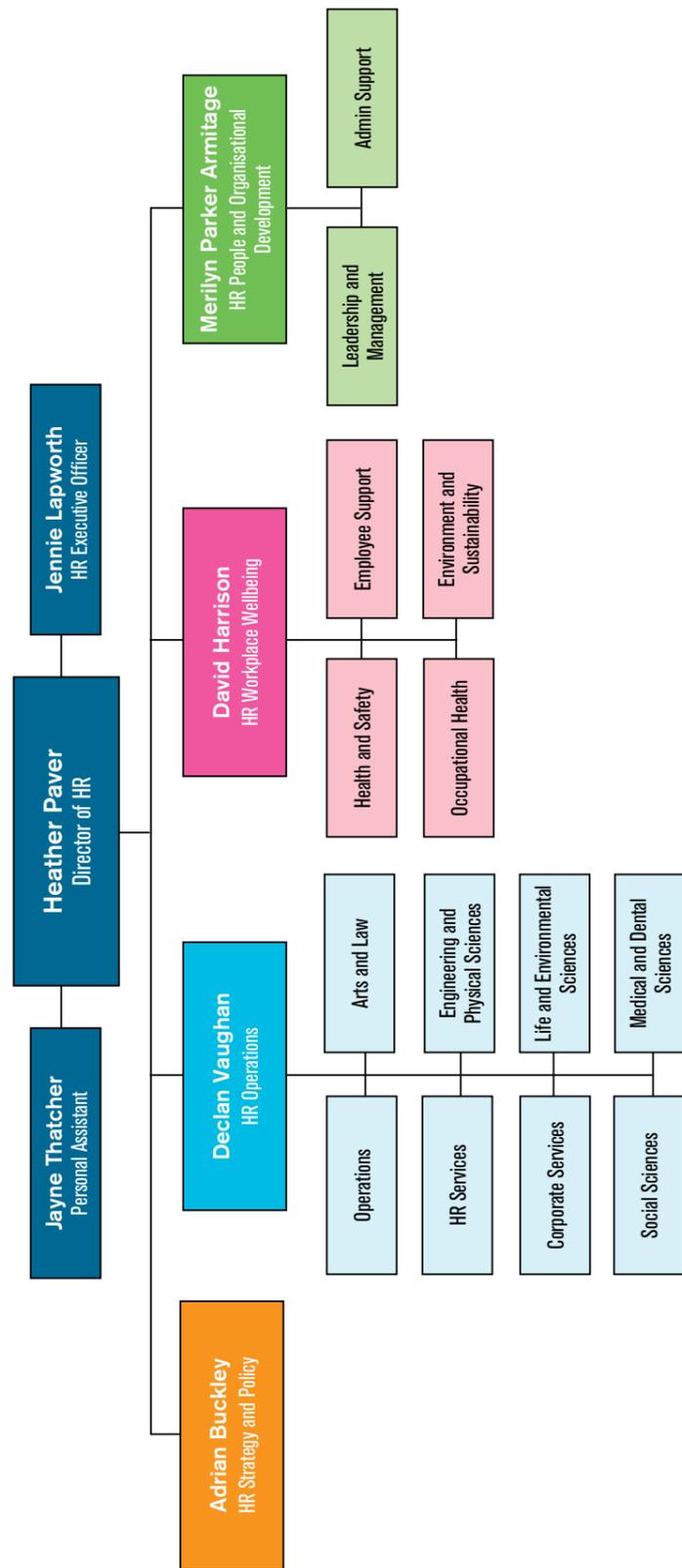
Jayne Thatcher
PA to the Director of HR



Jennie Lapworth
HR Executive Officer



HR: Organisation Chart



Strategy and Policy Team



Adrian Buckley
Assistant Director of HR

Nicola Collins PA

HR consultant
(Policy and pay)
Sally Ells

Employee Relations
Specialist
tba

Management Statistician
Rachel Jarrett

Diversity Advisor
Susan Squire

Policy Support Assistant
Vikki Pendleton

Operations Team



Declan Vaughan
Assistant Director of HR

Jenny Cotterill PA



Bal Bansal and team
Head of HR for
Corporate Services



Alison Jinks and team
Head of HR Services

Operations Team
Project Officer x2
Project Manager
Senior Appts Administrator

College Heads of HR



Sally Steele and team
Social Sciences



Zoe Oakes and team
Arts and Law



Lora Morris and team
Engineering and
Physical Sciences



Deb Bayliss and team
Life and Environmental
Sciences



Niamh Kelly and team
Medical and Dental
Sciences

Workplace Wellbeing



David Harrison
Assistant Director of HR

Dawn Eden PA

Employee Support Services
Alison McNeil, Manager
Angela Breen, Jean Harris
Employee Advisors
Connie Reading,
Administrator

Occupational Health
Philippa Hawkins,
Manager
Sophie Gask, Advisor
Ruth Wooton and
Brigette Roberts, Nurses
Yvonne Dickinson and
Joy Walker, Admin Support

Health and Safety
Mark Hoare, Manager
Gus Zabierik, Beverley
Davis and Dean Cross,
Advisors
Helen Janewska,
Radiation Technician
Alan Hickenbotham
and Bryan Eden,
Fire Safety Advisors
Frances Wakefield
and Melanie Ashfield,
Admin support

Environment and Sustainability
Trev Shields, Advisor

People and Organisational Development



Merilyn Parker Armitage
Assistant Director of HR

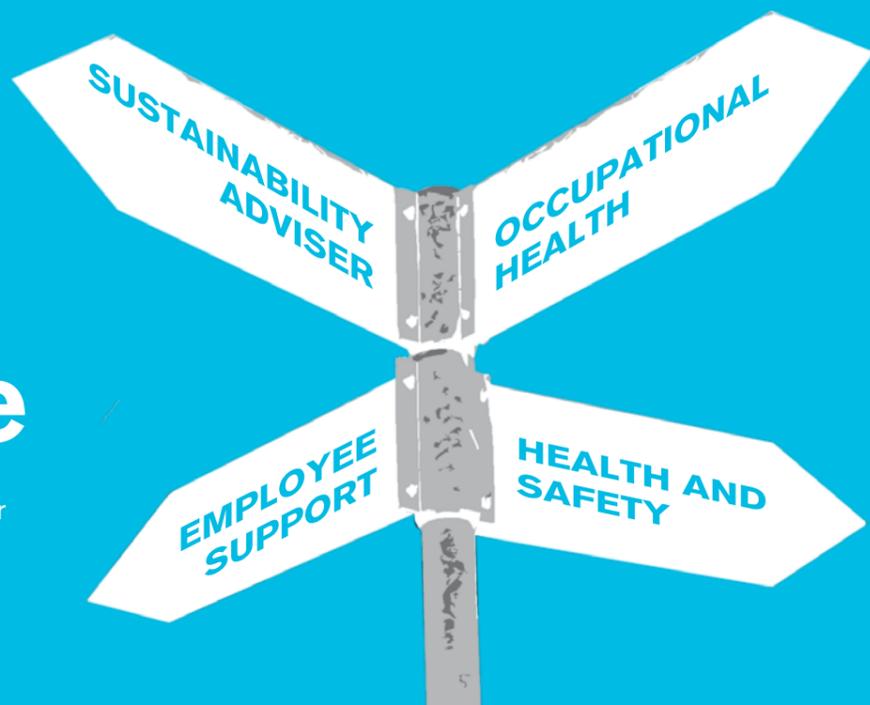
Anita King PA

POD Consultants
Vince O'Grady
(Corporate Services)
Karen Carter (LES)
Luke Mantle
(Corporate Services)
Karen Rushton (CAL)
Kate Crane (MDS)
Yvonne Yelken
Jayne Gilbert (COSS)

Admin Team
Conor McColdrick
Development Manager
Anisa Murudker
and Tom Stanasiuk
Programme Coordinators

The road to Wellville

David Harrison, Assistant Director of HR for Workplace Wellbeing, tells us about the opportunities and workplace support available for University staff.



Workplace Wellbeing, as the name suggests, has an overview for staff wellbeing and provides specialist services for the University, for managers and for individuals. Wellbeing relates to all aspects of our working lives, from the quality and safety of our physical environment, to how we feel about our work. Our aim is to ensure that we are all safe, healthy and engaged at work.

Workplace Wellbeing at the University is made up of several teams including Occupational Health, Health and Safety, Employee Support, and the University's Sustainability Adviser. We work closely with colleagues in Colleges and Corporate Services, and on individual projects and activities, such as the recently launched online Wellbeing programme (www.bham.ac.uk/wellbeing/action). We also help to promote wellbeing via the Wellbeing Advisory Group that includes membership of colleagues from across the University and Union representation.

Occupational Health is concerned with how your work affects your health, and how your health affects your work. Employee Advice and Support Services offer confidential help, support and advice to all employees, including a mediation service, harassment advisers, and the Citizens' Advice Bureau. Sustainability and Environment is heavily involved in developing and promoting the University's work to protect the environment and respond to climate change. The Health and Safety Unit deals with your physical environment and provides advice on fire safety, radiation protection, chemical hazards and more. More details on this

aspect of Workplace Wellbeing are provided below.

The nature of a Workplace Wellbeing role is very varied. We need to understand the latest sector research in order to advise effectively, to understand construction and design to have effective input on Health and Safety, and understand people management in order to support individuals and advise managers.

What is the University doing about Health and Safety (H&S)?

What 'the University' does involves the University's senior management, especially UEB, H&S staff in Workplace Wellbeing and University Committees and Advisory Groups. There is oversight at the highest level and UEB reports annually to the University Council on H&S. H&S is one of the key areas for the Workplace Wellbeing team. We provide a range of practical advice and guidance to colleagues and Postgraduate students. The team carry out H&S training to about 2,000 people a year on topics including fire safety, and correct use of hazardous substances.

An unseen but really important role for us is managing the University's relationship with legal enforcing authorities, such as the Health and Safety Executive, Environment Agency and West Midlands Fire Service. We get to know the inspectors and build up trust with them to help ensure a positive partnership. We also liaise with agencies that deal with anti-terrorism, chemical and Biological weapons conventions and Euratom. This is because of our expertise and knowledge of what happens at the University and our contacts with

colleagues in the Colleges. If we do this part of our job properly you won't notice anything!

To cover the breadth of potential risks at the University we have a team of specialist advisers and technical and admin support. There are advisers for radiation, hazardous substances, biological hazards, fire and more general risks. The nature of research activity, and the complexity of the laws associated with it, means that we need people who can understand this often highly technical work. The Occupational Health team also have an important input into the health aspects of H&S risk management and work closely with H&S advisers.

Our aim is always to ease any bureaucratic burden imposed by legislation by interpreting it into University specific policy and guidance. We also advise on construction projects and the myriad activities that you find on a large campus housing a community of almost 36,000 people.

Further details on courses available and the structure of Health and Safety at the University are available on the HSU website at www.hsu.bham.ac.uk.

Learn more

Contacting the Wellbeing Team:

Find out more about Workplace Wellbeing at www.hr.bham.ac.uk/wellbeing. A full list of contacts for specific Health and Safety queries is available at www.intranet.bham.ac.uk/university/hsu/advice.shtml

Research skills and support

In addition to training and development opportunities available to all staff, the People and Organisational Development (POD) team provide a range of tools designed specifically for research staff.

The University's Strategic Framework recognises the contribution that researchers make to its success, and the importance of ongoing development to individual and institutional reputation. There is a Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers that sets out the expectations and responsibilities of researchers, their managers, employers and funders. The Concordat has seven principles, one of which recognises the importance that researchers' personal and career development is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career.

POD work with researchers and managers across the University to ensure that researchers have a wide range of development opportunities throughout their career at Birmingham. In recognition of this ongoing commitment, the University attained The HR Excellence in Research Award in September 2011.

Key development and support opportunities for research staff are available at both University wide and College level. A few of the recent schemes and projects within Colleges include:

- The College of Social Sciences has established a Research Staff Committee which works to represent and champion researchers' interests and views.
- The College of Medical and Dental Sciences has a well established Researcher Development Committee

delivering support including, grant writing, careers workshops, and access to mentors.

- The College of Life and Environmental Sciences also has a variety of supporting activities including career development seminars, and researcher specific induction processes.

Researchers also have access to specific campus wide development activities. These include a PG Certificate in Academic Practice run by CLAD, and an Enterprise and Entrepreneurship development programme run by Research and Commercial Services. POD also provide a Research Team Leader programme, available by nomination to both research staff aspiring to lead research teams and existing Research Leaders.

It is also important to foster an environment where researchers can develop during their career at Birmingham. The Senior Leadership Programme, Research Team Leader Programme and the new Performance Development Programme all seek to develop those who manage and lead our research community and provide opportunity's to develop technically, professionally and personally.

For further details on development opportunities for research staff visit www.hr.bham.ac.uk/development/guides/researchers.shtml

Funding at the touch of a button!

Research Professional is a leading online research funding database. It provides thousands of funding opportunities from sponsors around the world – from the largest research council to the smallest private charity, from travel grants to industry fellowships. Funding opportunities are linked to searchable discipline terms, and users can access current and historical articles on key research policy developments.

'The invaluable resource for keeping in touch with both funding opportunities and current research policy'

Professor Adam Tickell, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Transfer

'I've found Research Professional to be very helpful, with the main benefit of receiving direct alerts on funding opportunities in my area that I may not have otherwise seen.'

Dr Ian Boardley, Lecturer in Sport Psychology and Education

To help users make the most of this valuable resource, Research and Commercial Services run dedicated lunch-time briefing sessions on the first Monday of every month. Users are shown how to register on Research Professional, and given time to test the system in an interactive session.

Contact Sally Wiley s.a.wiley@bham.ac.uk or visit www.researchprofessional.com for further details.

Research Professional



We recognise that we cannot be complacent in our aspirations to create an engaging environment for development. As part of the HR Excellence Award we are implementing an action plan that addresses any potential gaps in our training provision for research staff. The full Concordat review and action plan can be viewed at www.hr.bham.ac.uk/development/guides/RSCConcordat.shtml.

PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (POD)

Helping to realise your potential

Merilyn Parker-Armitage, Assistant Director of HR for People and Organisational Development (POD) introduces the wide range of tools and training available to University staff.

Our aim in POD is to give every member of staff in the University the opportunity to achieve their full potential as a researcher, teacher, manager, administrator or specialist service supporter. POD comprises a team of dedicated learning and development specialists who utilise a range of resources to help ensure that colleagues across the University are able to achieve and even exceed both their own and the University's goals and targets.

It is likely that your initial experience of POD will have been in your first few weeks at the University in one of our induction sessions. POD organises and runs monthly 'Welcome' meetings, to which all new members of staff are invited. The meetings provide an overview of the University's history, strategic goals, and commitment to the ongoing development of its staff community, and of course the opportunity to meet colleagues from across the University. This is, however, unlikely to be your last involvement with POD, as we design activities, tools, and training to help you through every stage of your University career.

WHAT CAN POD OFFER YOU?

POD activities are as broad and varied as the development requirements of our colleagues and the skills of our organisation development team. They include conventional personal and professional support such as face-to-face skills training, the provision of virtual and other resources, and career development coaching for individuals.

We also help to plan and implement Human Resources projects across the University, including a development programme for Heads of Schools in all Colleges. We provide dedicated support and guidance to management teams throughout the University and carry out bespoke development work with whole teams and departments.

POD opportunities for all staff include:

- **Training** – we design and deliver in-house training programmes on a range of themes, from Change Management to CV Writing, and from Mentoring to Minute Taking. These courses vary in length and delivery method, but all are free to attend and open to all University staff.
- **Developing Your Future** – a free online resource that offers a range of self assessment and review tools to help you track and define your own development. You can access Developing Your Future and further development resources via the 'my.skills' tab on the staff portal my.bham.ac.uk.
- **Team building** – we can work with managers to develop bespoke workshops which can help teams to explore the way they work together and become more effective.
- **Coaching** – we work with individuals to identify their development needs and career goals. Performance and Development Reviews are a critical element of this work since they help managers to build a picture of the development needs of their team, which in turn can help to build an overall picture for Schools, Departments, and Colleges.
- **Consultancy** – working with senior managers to develop future plans that will help them to achieve their strategic goals, and deliver their team and department goals.

Learn more

To find out more about the range of training courses and development opportunities available with POD, including dates, registration details, and further information on ILM Certificates and the Senior Leadership Programme, visit the University's POD pages at www.hr.bham.ac.uk/development.

PROMOTING OUTSTANDING DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the wide range of 'in-house' training courses and opportunities provided by POD we also work closely with colleagues both within and outside the University to offer professional development courses and qualifications.

Institute of Leadership and Management

We are an accredited ILM Centre (The Institute of Leadership and Management) which means that we can offer programmes specifically designed to support, develop and inform managers at every stage of their career. ILM is nationally recognised as a provider of industry-leading management qualifications and POD currently offers staff the chance to study for ILM certificates in Team Leading, First Line Management and Management.

Over 250 University staff have achieved an ILM qualification, across all levels, since December 2008. Recent ILM graduates were presented with their certificates by Professor Edward Peck, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Social Sciences, at a celebratory ceremony held on campus.

Senior Leadership Programme

We also run the Senior Leadership Programme, which is specifically designed to assist and support staff to face strategic and high-level challenges. The programme focuses on preparing attendees to lead in senior cross-institutional strategic roles in higher education. Modules include tailored training events, networking opportunities, action learning sets and a strategic group project. The course gives senior leaders the opportunity to develop a strong network of colleagues from around the University and other academic institutions.

Personal profiles

POD can also provide detailed tools to help individuals and teams to understand personality, preference and potential in the workplace. By working with POD colleagues and using industry recognised tools such as Belbin Team Roles and MBTI workbooks, we can help you to recognise your individual strengths and preferences. These results can highlight personal work based skills, interests and areas for development.



Recent ILM graduates

PERFECTING OUR DELIVERY

We work with teams and colleagues across the University to make sure that our courses and development opportunities are designed to provide maximum potential for personal and professional development. We also develop resources around capabilities laid out in the University's Strategic Framework including collaborative working, strategic thinking and organisational understanding.

We regularly consult with staff on courses and evaluate our activities to ensure that POD programmes provide the content, structure and breadth of topics that our colleagues want and need. We encourage attendees to provide open and honest feedback on all POD courses, and also run focus groups and questionnaires to assess how skills acquired through POD can be practically applied in the workplace.

Feedback from colleagues is essential in ensuring that we can constantly review and improve what we offer as a team.

We also network and work with other organisational development experts both within the University and externally to keep up with and inform current thinking in the field.

Please don't hesitate to contact us at pod@contacts.bham.ac.uk if you have any feedback or suggestions on POD courses you have attended.

Birmingham Benefits

Bryoney Johnson looks at the wide range of facilities and offers available to staff across the University.

There are many benefits to being part of the University community; such as enjoying free entry to Winterbourne House and Garden, visiting the excellent collection at the Barber Institute, using the University's sports facilities, or simply sitting on the grass at University Square. Birmingham also offers retail and childcare facilities, the monthly farmers market, and of course our very own fruit and veg stall.

Did you know that there are also great money saving offers available to University staff on a wide range of products and services from dental care to driving lessons and hotels to handmade jewellery? Below is just a sample of the great Birmingham benefits on offer:

CycleScheme

This salary sacrifice scheme offers considerable savings on bikes and safety equipment. For further information, including useful links and information for cyclists around campus, visit www.hr.bham.ac.uk/benefits/travel.shtml

Childcare voucher scheme

This salary sacrifice scheme is open to employees who pay tax and national insurance, and helps to save money on childcare costs. Further information is available at www.hr.bham.ac.uk/benefits/care4.shtml

Car and home insurance

You can benefit from up to 15% off car insurance and up to 45% off home insurance from Endsleigh. Find out more at www.hr.bham.ac.uk/benefits/discounts.shtml#insurance

Health cash plan

A low-cost alternative to medical insurance; the BHSF health cash plan has a range of options to suit your budget. The premiums are deducted via your salary. Further information is available on the HR website at: www.hr.bham.ac.uk/benefits/help.shtml#bhsf

NUS Extra Card

University staff can purchase an NUS Extra card, which offers a range of exclusive discounts, offers and competitions. Discounts include 10% off at Topshop, JJB Sports, Matalan, Superdrug; 15% off Toni & Guy Essentials; and 25% off at Domino's Pizza. The card costs £11 per year and part of the sale price goes back to the Guild of Students. Visit www.nusextra.co.uk for more details and to register.

Payroll giving

Payroll giving or Give as you Earn (GAYE) is a fantastic way to donate to your favourite charities. The donation comes from your pay each month before income tax, meaning the charity receive what you would have paid in tax as part of the gift. To find out more, visit www.hr.bham.ac.uk/benefits/gaye.shtml

Staff Extras

The University has a range of exclusive discounts and deals on the Staff Extras website. It's a one-stop online shop where you can get great discounts, and build up and redeem points on products including hotels, clothes, electrical goods and theatre tickets. Find out more at www.hr.bham.ac.uk/benefits/staffextras.shtml

Vodafone contracts

Save up to 20% on pay monthly phone deals with Vodafone. Up to five friends or family members can also take advantage of this deal. Visit www.hr.bham.ac.uk/benefits/discounts.shtml#vodafone to find out more.

Campus Community

In addition to these great benefits there is also a vibrant campus community, packed with groups, events and opportunities, for University staff to get involved in.

Networks

There are a wide range of staff networks across campus including:

Staff disability group

Group for any member of staff who considers themselves to be disabled, or to have expertise or influence in key related areas of the University.

Black and minority ethnic (BME) staff group

Staff from all backgrounds and staff groups who have an interest in issues affecting BME staff are welcome to join.

Email equality@contacts.bham.ac.uk for further details on the BME or Disability groups.

LGBTQ Rainbow network

The LGBTQ Rainbow Network is for all staff at the University who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer and friends and allies of the LGBTQ communities. Contact lgbtq@contacts.bham.ac.uk for details.

Birmingham University Bicycle User Group (BUBUG)

This staff group works with like-minded bicycle users from the City Council and other groups to improve cycle facilities. BUBUG is open to anyone at the University, especially those who cycle and who have an interest in the facilities provided on campus. Visit www.cycling.bham.ac.uk for details.

Spread the word about your society!

Are you a member of a University club, group or activity that you would like to promote across campus? Email university-buzz@bham.ac.uk with details of how colleagues can get involved and we will do all we can to help promote your events and details across the University. Look out for further details on campus community events and opportunities in upcoming editions of Buzz and Buzz bitesize and on the University intranet.

Staff societies

The University is also home to a number of staff societies and groups offering broad opportunities for social networking and sharing interests with colleagues.

Mermaid's cricket club

Mermaids is the University staff cricket team. Visit www.mermaidscc.co.uk for details.

Birmingham University Staff Golf Society (BUSGS)

BUSGS organises outings throughout the year, including matches against staff from other universities, the City Council and students. The club caters for all golfing abilities.

LUCIA (Life Uplifted by Change In Africa)

LUCIA is the chosen charity of Library Services with members of staff serving as Trustees. Supporters give their time voluntarily to raise money for women and children in Ethiopia. Visit www.luciacharity.org.uk to find out more.