2025

WiNUK AWARDS IMPACT REPORT

Inspire, Connect, Advocate

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A Message From Our Founder

Why did WiNUK host this event?

The WiNUK Awards 2025 aimed to uplift the neuroscience community by celebrating...

- **Pioneering women in neuroscience**, improving confidence, visibility and gender balance.
- **Cutting-edge sex/gender research** in neuroscience by people of any gender.
- Efforts towards **inclusion in neuroscience workspaces** by people of any gender.

"After months of planning, it was wonderful to see everything come together for the biggest Women in Neuroscience UK event yet.



I've enjoyed overseeing the impact reporting on WiNUK Awards 2025, from survey development to presenting the results here in this report. It's fantastic to see the event had **real tangible benefits** to attendees across career stages.

I'm now looking forward to next year's WiNUK activities as we continue our efforts to inspire, connect and advocate for more inclusive neuroscience. Thanks for being with us on this journey."

~ Lizzie English, Founder of WiNUK

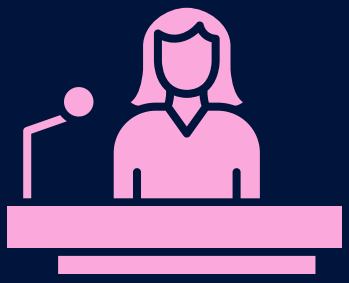
THE AWARDS IN NUMBERS



6 months of planning



18 volunteers at the event



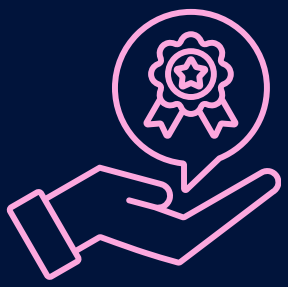
2 keynote speakers



15 virtual attendees



113 in-person attendees



190 nominations



38 judges



42 finalists



13 winners



4 sponsors

How WiNUK Awards has Advanced Our Mission

In the following pages, feedback from interactive polling during the event and post-event surveys (to capture those who did not complete live polling) were analysed together (up to 69 respondents) and compared with our pre-event survey (up to 37 respondents) to assess how WiNUK Awards 2025 supported WiNUK's core mission pillars:

INSPIRE



WiNUK has opened new avenues for women in our network by providing confidence, scientific knowledge, networking opportunities, careers advice, and training in leadership and science communication.

Members of the WiNUK Volunteer Team have credited WiNUK for their professional growth, and for support in securing roles in academia and science communication careers.

WiNUK has also inspired change through crucial advocacy work.

CONNECT



WiNUK has fostered genuine connections – within our close-knit volunteer team and broader community.

From WiNUK's inception in 2022, our volunteer team has produced engaging digital content and events that have attracted attendees from around the world.

We take pride in providing honest and supportive spaces for people at all career stages to discuss gender inequity, connect with others and seek advice.

ADVOCATE



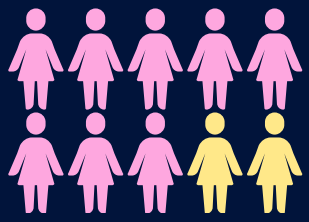
By identifying and voicing the barriers faced by women in science, WiNUK aims to improve the progression, satisfaction and retention of women in neuroscience.

By encouraging people of all genders, locations, ages and career areas to engage with our content, WiNUK boosts recognition of the problems facing women, and helps people consider how they can take actions towards more inclusive neuroscience.

Visit our website for more information on our impact:
https://www.womeninneuroscienceuk.org/impact

Understanding Our Community Before the Awards

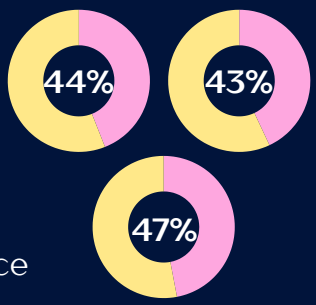
Pre-event survey



80% felt inspired by WiNUK

Less than half...

- observed visible role models
- felt connected to wider UK neuroscience community
- felt unbiased career progression in their workplace



= *a need for WiNUK Awards, and further WiNUK activities*

Before the event, those signed up to attend WiNUK Awards 2025 expressed both **enthusiasm and unmet needs** in the pre-event survey (up to 37 respondents).

A large majority (80%) reported feeling **inspired** by WiNUK's initiatives to date, despite many commenting that they would be attending a WiNUK event for the first time with WiNUK Awards 2025. This highlights the importance of WiNUK's mission, as well as our digital activities.

Many respondents demonstrated awareness of the challenges facing women in the field (63%) and a willingness to advocate for change: 71% felt confident to speak up for gender equity in their workplace. This may have been contributed by WiNUK's educational online materials.

However, it was felt **support structures for women in neuroscience remained limited**: fewer than half of respondents felt connected to the wider UK neuroscience community (43%), felt that role models and mentors were visible (44%), or felt their workplace supported career progression regardless of gender identity (47%). These results highlight continuing barriers, which WiNUK aims to help tackle through a mission to inspire, connect and advocate for inclusive neuroscience.

The clearest message emerged in near-unanimous form:

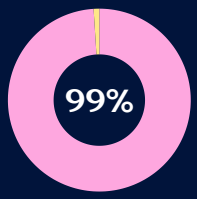
94% believed that gender equity events in neuroscience are essential.

This is a powerful endorsement of WiNUK's mission and a mandate for continued action.

INSPIRE

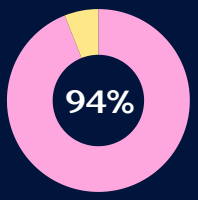
The WiNUK Awards were designed to inspire by celebrating excellence, increasing visibility of role models across career stages, and creating a space where women and allies in neuroscience feel recognised and valued.

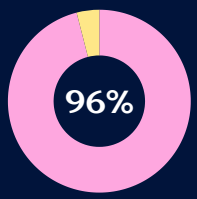
At WiNUK Awards 2025...



99% felt **inspired** being around women and allies in neuroscience.

94% found the award categories **relevant and meaningful.**





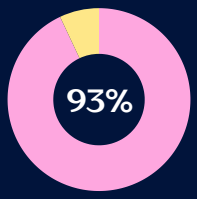
96% agreed WiNUK is increasing the **visibility** of women in neuroscience.

(From up to 69 respondents, combining entries from live polling and post-event surveys).

This feedback shows WiNUK Awards 2025 consistently delivered an experience that was meaningful, relevant, and inspiring.

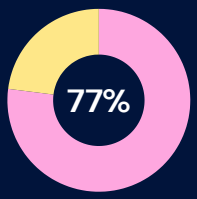
CONNECT

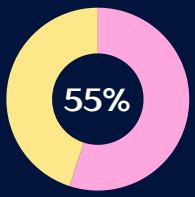
At WiNUK, we believe connection and belonging are essential for scientists to succeed. WiNUK Awards aims to bring people together across career stages, institutions, and identities, creating opportunities for supportive networking and meaningful connection.



93% agreed that WiNUK creates an **inclusive environment** for people of all genders and backgrounds.

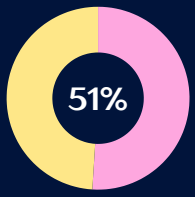
77% felt part of a **supportive community** through WiNUK.





55% agreed that WiNUK has helped **expand their network.**

51% – over half of respondents – agreed that WiNUK Awards 2025 **helped them connect** with people who could **support their career.**



(From up to 69 respondents, combining entries from live polling and post-event surveys).

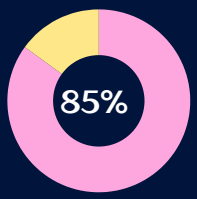
Attendees reported forming new professional connections and experiencing a strong sense of community through WiNUK. Importantly, many attendees highlighted the feeling of being welcomed into an inclusive and supportive network. These outcomes directly address pre-event survey responses around community connection within neuroscience.

ADVOCATE

Advocacy is central to WiNUK's mission. Beyond celebration and connection, WiNUK Awards aims to deepen understanding of gender inequality in neuroscience workplaces and research itself, and empower individuals to take action.

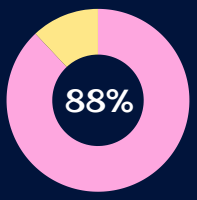
100% agreed it is clear that **WiNUK is committed to advocating for gender equity in neuroscience.**

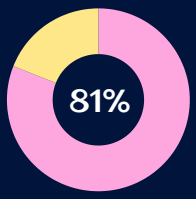




85% agreed WiNUK Awards 2025 **increased their awareness of sex/gender inequalities** in neuroscience research and culture.

88% agreed WiNUK Awards 2025 **motivated them to take action to promote inclusive workplaces.**





81% agreed WiNUK Awards 2025 **encouraged them to consider sex/gender in their research.**

(From up to 69 respondents, combining entries from live polling and post-event surveys).

WiNUK Awards 2025 supported attendees towards **translating awareness into action.** Most attendees agreed the event increased their awareness, research reflection, and motivation to act, indicating WiNUK Awards contributed not only to learning, but to a readiness to promote more inclusive practices in neuroscience. These statistics from during and after the event are greater than pre-event survey scoring, suggesting WiNUK Awards 2025 successfully contributed to WiNUK's advocacy objectives.

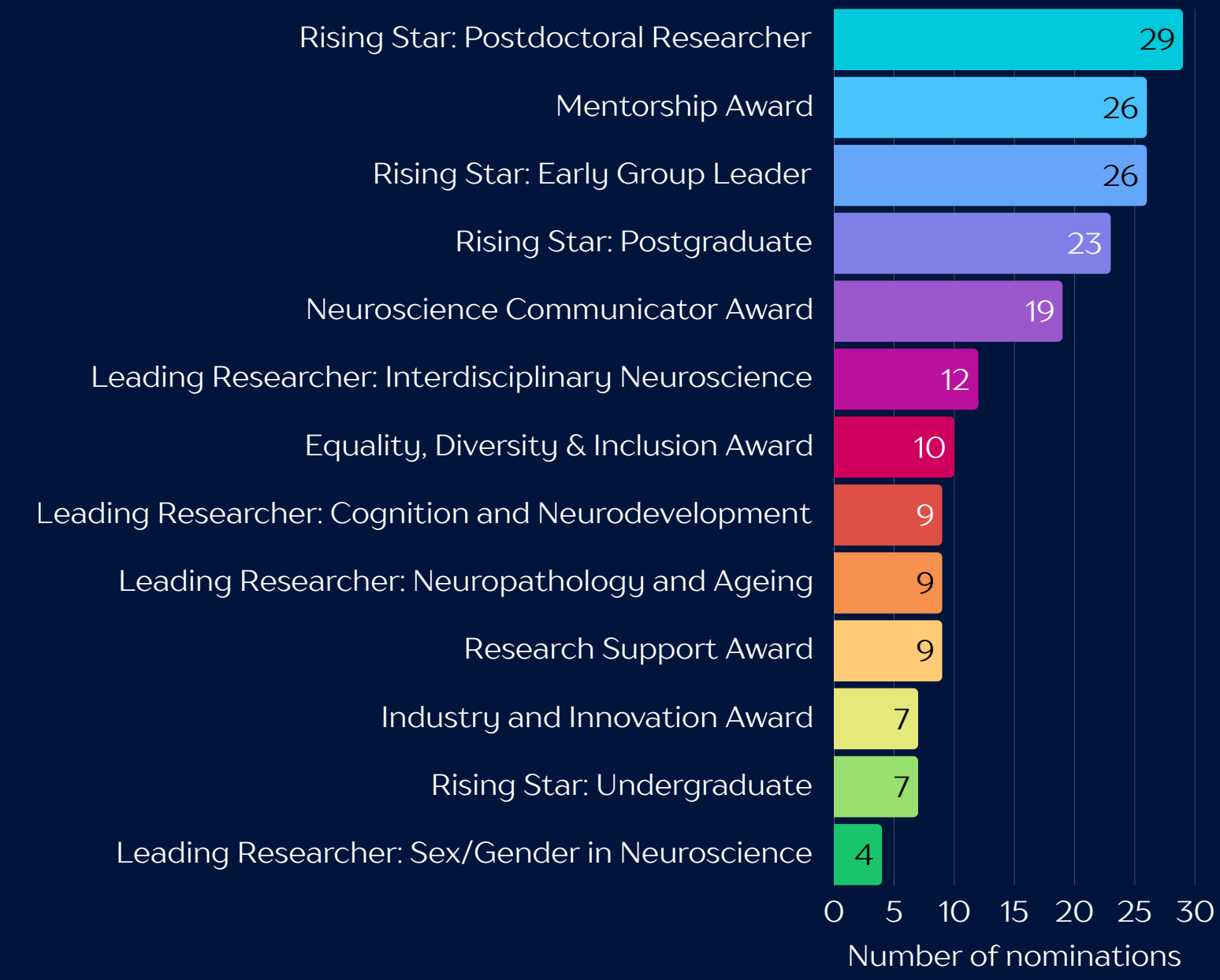
Nominations

190 Total Nominations

55 of which were multi-category nominations

(This excludes nominations for the WiNUK Volunteer Awards which were internally nominated and voted upon)

Award categories



This presents an increase in nominations since WiNUK Awards 2024, on account of a longer nomination period and targetted social media efforts in 2025.

Nominee demographics

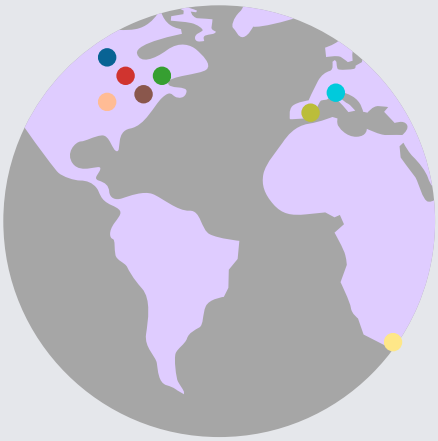
Location and institution

There were **55 distinct institutional affiliations**: this includes nominators, nominees, and finalists

Nominators and nominees were based at institutions across England, Scotland and Wales.



Nominators from around the world!



Europe

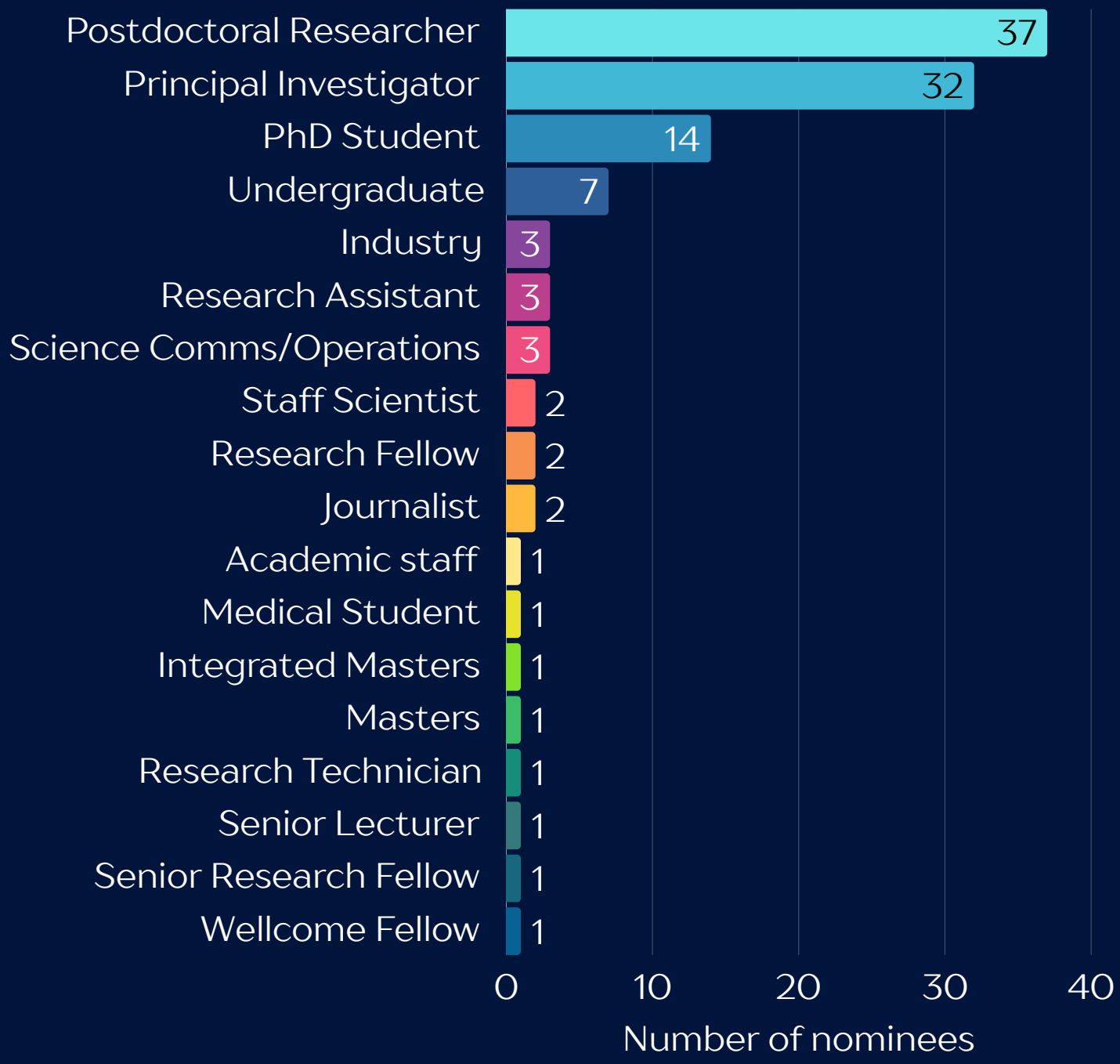
Lausanne University Hospital / University of Lausanne — Switzerland
Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria — Spain

Rest of the World

Harvard Medical School /McLean Hospital — United States
Yale University — United States
University of Connecticut — United States
University of the Witwatersrand - South Africa

Nominee demographics

Career stage



The majority of nominators and nominees were in the sector of academia: 89% of nominators and 94% of nominees. The remainder represented charity, industry and other sectors.

Meet WiNUK Awards 2025 Winners: Recognition Awards

Recognition Awards aimed to increase the visibility of women who are starting to make key contributions to neuroscience, at all early career stages. Within this theme, the Rising Star Awards celebrated neuroscientists in career stages ranging from undergraduate to early group leader, and the Research Support Award recognised crucial research support staff who may often go unnoticed or uncelebrated.



Rising Star – Undergraduate
Winner: **Aiman Muhammad,** *University of Strathclyde*
Aiman has already shown a wealth of research potential, from co-authoring period pain research, to writing for the WiNUK blog and volunteering for ARUK.

Rising Star – Postgraduate
Winner: **Margherita Zenoni**, *University of Cambridge, Orchard OCD UK*
Margherita has shown exceptional research impact through public engagement, and recently securing Wellcome Trust funding to launch the first International Conference on OCD.





Rising star – Postdoctoral Researcher
Winner: **Dr Hannah Jackson,** *University of Nottingham*
Hannah's work on childhood brain cancer is truly transformative, from co-authoring internationally recognised MISEV guidelines to leading her own fellowship-funded research programme.

Rising star – Early Group Leader
Winner: **Dr Sage Boettcher,** *University of Oxford*
As head of Oxford's dynamic cognition lab, Sage uses mixed methods to reveal how we focus in dynamic environments, as well as being a devoted mentor, teacher and open science champion.





Research Support Award
Winner: **Dishaa Sinha,** *University of Oxford*
Disha led the set-up of 27 UK research sites for the FAST Brain Health study to track dementia risk, alongside managing the Great Minds trial-ready cohort and organising public engagement events.

Meet WiNUK Awards 2025 Winners: Outreach and Development Awards

The Outreach and Development Awards celebrate individuals making meaningful differences to others, whether driving innovation in industry, delivering accessible neuroscience communication, advocating for inclusion, or supporting early career researchers through mentorship. These activities are essential to science and society, deserving our recognition.



Industry and Innovation Award

Winner: **Dr Anna Andreou**, *King's College London*

Anna has spearheaded cutting-edge research on novel treatment for migraine, influencing NICE treatment approvals. She has also developed the first National Audit of Headache Disorders and Migraine with industrial support, driving lasting improvements in patient care.

Neuroscience Communicator Award

Sponsored by The Transmitter

Winner: **Dr Rachel Honeyghan-Williams**, *University College London*

Rachel's communication work ranges from providing scientific guidance on an award-winning children's book about neurodiversity to using tabletop gaming to make neuroscience ideas accessible at the British Science Festival.





Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Award

Sponsored by Wellcome Trust

Winner: **Dr Yolanda Ohene,** *University of Manchester*

Yolanda's fellowship project focuses on how medical imaging research can better serve historically marginalised groups. Beyond her research, she holds multiple leadership roles across several groups supporting Black and mixed-race heritage physicists.

Mentorship Award

Winner: **Dr Helen Nuttall**, *Lancaster University*

Helen has a thriving lab and leads with compassion, voicing academic challenges and tailoring support to individual needs. Beyond the lab, Helen hosts the podcast "Drs Confess", empowering early career researchers.



Meet WiNUK Awards 2025 Winners: Leading Researcher Awards

Leading Researcher Awards recognise leaders breaking new ground in neuroscience, making significant contributions to our understanding of the brain. Winners in this category are also helping to close gender gaps in leadership and supporting the next generation of scientists.



Neuropathology and Ageing

Sponsored by Alzheimer's Research UK

Winner: **Dr Emily Lane-Hill,** *University of Warwick*

Emily is a "Race against Dementia" Fellow, whose innovative research combines electrophysiological, molecular and computational techniques to understand tau protein contributions to dementia. Her work is already beginning to shape diagnostic and treatment approaches for Alzheimer's.

Cognition and Neurodevelopment

Winner: **Dr Kate Baker,** *University of Cambridge*

Kate identified the first case of Barker-Gordon syndrome, and works in understanding other genetic neurodevelopmental disorders and providing better support for patients and families. She also hosts international webinars on rare diseases, and inspires young minds in schools outreach.





Interdisciplinary Neuroscience

Winner: **Professor Valentina Escott-Price,**

Cardiff University/Prifysgol Caerdydd

Valentina has spent over 20 years at Cardiff bridging mathematics and neuroscience to understand the genetics behind dementia. She was one of the first to show that thousands of genes contribute to Alzheimer's risk, and has used this to develop tools to identify at-risk individuals.

Sex/Gender Research in Neuroscience

Sponsored by UK Dementia Research Institute

Winner: **Professor Ruth Dobson,**

Queen Mary, University of London

Ruths work spans both advocacy and groundbreaking science, with her work focusing on pregnancy and womens health in MS patients. She has led the publication of UK guidelines on pregnancy in MS, and leads the UK MS Pregnancy Register.



Meet WiNUK Awards 2025 Winners: Volunteers



Volunteer of the Year:
Amy Boyack
WiNUK People & Operations Lead
PhD Candidate, Newcastle University

"No task is ever too much and you can always count on Amy to give a helping hand or a listening ear. Amy's passion for WiNUK's mission is clear and she deserves recognition!"

Project of the Year:
WiNUK x RFI: Women in Science Day
Shauna Angell, WiNUK In-Person Events

Women in Science: Overcoming Barriers and Unlocking New Career Opportunities' was held on International Women's Day 2025 in collaboration with the Rosalind Franklin Institute.

The day brought together researchers from across disciplines and career stages to explore how gender shapes research data, alongside personal reflections on career progression and inequality.





Volunteer Commitment Awards:
22 volunteers passed their **one-year volunteering** milestone!

Our Keynote Speakers



Dr Carole Torsney
Reader, University of Edinburgh
Talk: Pain: Sex matters

Dr Carole Torsney's research focuses on changes in pain processing in chronic pain, with a particular interest in understanding sex differences.

Her talk highlighted how women are more likely to suffer from chronic pain, have more severe symptoms, and are under-represented in research. She also shared her work using preclinical models to decipher some of the underlying mechanisms of this difference.





Professor Selina Wray
Professor, University College London
Talk: Highs, Lows and Lessons: A Scientist's Journey

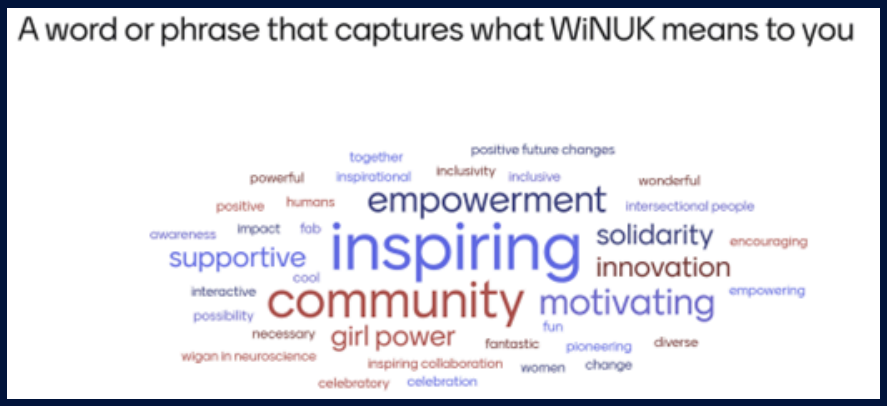
Professor Selina Wray is a ARUK Senior Research Fellow at UCL, using induced pluripotent stem cells to better understand molecular mechanisms of different dementias.

As career keynote, her talk reflected on her career journey: from growing up on benefits and her first job working at William Hill through to securing fellowships, she offered valuable tips and tricks to early career researchers.



Feedback overview

An interactive word cloud captured live at the event (45 respondents):









Our post-event survey offered a final opportunity for attendees to provide feedback, on their overall event experience, and their experience in their respective roles – as winners, finalists, judges, volunteers or sponsors – as reported in the next pages.

Communications (4.4)

24 respondents

Venue and location (4.3)

23 respondents

Catering (3.5)

Feedback: Winners and Finalists

All finalists and winners who responded to the post-event survey agreed the awards process **helped them feel their contributions to neuroscience are valued** (8/8).

All winners who responded agreed that winning a WiNUK award **increased the visibility of their work**, and had a **positive impact on challenging gender bias** in neuroscience (3/3).





"Honoured to receive this recognition at the Women in Neuroscience UK Awards. A heartfelt congratulations and thank you to Lizzie English and the entire WiNUK team and volunteers for creating **a community where women in science feel encouraged, valued and seen.** Grateful to be part of this. Feeling proud of what has been achieved and **motivated for all that is still to come**."

"It was **lovely to hear about all the fantastic work that women and allies in neuroscience are doing across the country**, and it was such a brilliant surprise that I was the winner in my category."

"It has been a fantastic evening **networking with inspirational women who are shaping the future of Neuroscience**!"

Feedback: Winners from 2024

In blogs and video interviews, **long-term positive impacts** of winning WiNUK Awards have been captured:

"I was able to use it as part of an application to get my senior fellowship for teaching."



Dr Rebecca Trueman from the University of Nottingham won the award for Inclusive Workplace Development at WiNUK Awards 2025

"It helps on your CV, building recognition of underrepresented groups. I think it's really important what WiNUK are doing. It does a lot for the impostor syndrome.

"Mentoring is not always easy to quantify, and while it brings personal satisfaction it's rarely acknowledged in a formal way. I would absolutely encourage the continuation of this award scheme."

"This recognition motivates me to continue pushing for greater inclusivity in neuroscience research."

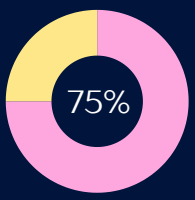
"I hope this will shape how other scientists and funders view me, that I care about having a well-rounded approach to science."

Feedback: Judges



All judges who responded (8/8) ...

- agreed that **participating as a judge helped them contribute to supporting women in neuroscience**.
- were satisfied with the support and communication provided before and during the evaluation process.
- **would return as a judge** or recommend judging WiNUK awards to a friend or colleague.



75% of judge respondents were satisfied with the clarity of the judging process and criteria.

"The Women in Neuroscience UK Awards ceremony last night was a **celebration of the exceptional talent and community in our field.**

It was an honour to judge the Industry and Innovation award that celebrates exceptional contributions to translation with Karen Skinner. Congratulations to finalists Emma V. Jones and Joanne Kenney, PhD and this year's winner, Anna Andreou who's pioneering pain research is **transforming the lives of patients.**

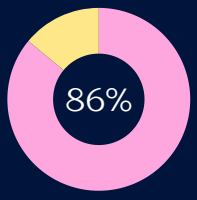
Congratulations and thank you to Lizzie English and all the WiNUK team and volunteers for building this community and movement. Cara Croft gave a wonderful introduction to the Rising Stars category and noted that **exceptional research and leadership go hand in hand with kindness** and this really matched the theme of the evening"



~ Dr Fiona Ducotterd, CSO of ARUK UCL Drug Discovery Institute, and a Judge of WiNUK Awards 2025.

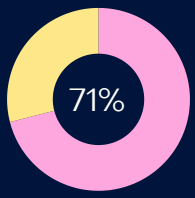
Feedback: Volunteers

Overall experience as a WiNUK volunteer (4.6)



86% of respondents agreed that volunteering with WiNUK has **helped develop their personal and professional skills** (6/7 respondents).

71% of respondents agreed that being a WiNUK volunteer has **helped their career progression**.







"Developed even more of a love for neuroscience!"

"As a WiNUK volunteer I have **gained confidence in my ability**"

"WiNUK has allowed me to **expand my team building** and **collaborative skills** that I have been able to **take forward into my career**"

Sponsors: Making WiNUK Awards 2025 possible

WiNUK Awards 2025 was made possible through the generous support of our **sponsors**, who **directly enabled the scale, accessibility and described impacts of this event.**

We were thrilled to collaborate with **Wellcome Trust** as our Platinum Sponsor, alongside three Silver Sponsors, **Alzheimer's Research UK, The Transmitter** and **UK Dementia Research Institute.**



Sponsorship funding supported every aspect of WiNUK Awards 2025, including:

- Printed materials – from programmes to trophies.
- Catering and event production, **increasing the number of in-person attendees** that we could accomodate at this year's event.
- **WiNUK attendance grants**, supporting care costs, transport and accomodation for finalists, judges, speakers and volunteers, **directly reducing barriers to participation**.

By helping to cover event costs, sponsors made it possible for the event tickets to be sold as pay-as-you-like, for instance **enabling no-cost attendance for people who would otherwise not be able to attend.**

It was a pleasure to have sponsor representatives attending the event as **award presenters**: sharing the nominees' work and the category's importance. Several sponsors kindly offered **additional prizes** for their sponsored award winners, from science communication training to free conference attendance and goodie bags.



Sponsors: Feedback

To support sponsors, WiNUK provided complementary tickets for their attendance, platformed their branding across printed and digital materials including sponsored trophies, and offered opportunities for in-person flyer exhibition and social media templates for the event.

Finally, WiNUK provided this post-event impact report to help sponsors' highlight their contributions towards diversity, equity and inclusion.







In our post-event survey, the sponsor representative responding agreed:

- sponsoring WiNUK helped **increase the visibility of their organisation,**
- helped their organisation **demonstrate commitment to equity and inclusion** in neuroscience, and
- **they would sponsor WiNUK again** / recommend sponsoring WiNUK to other organisations.

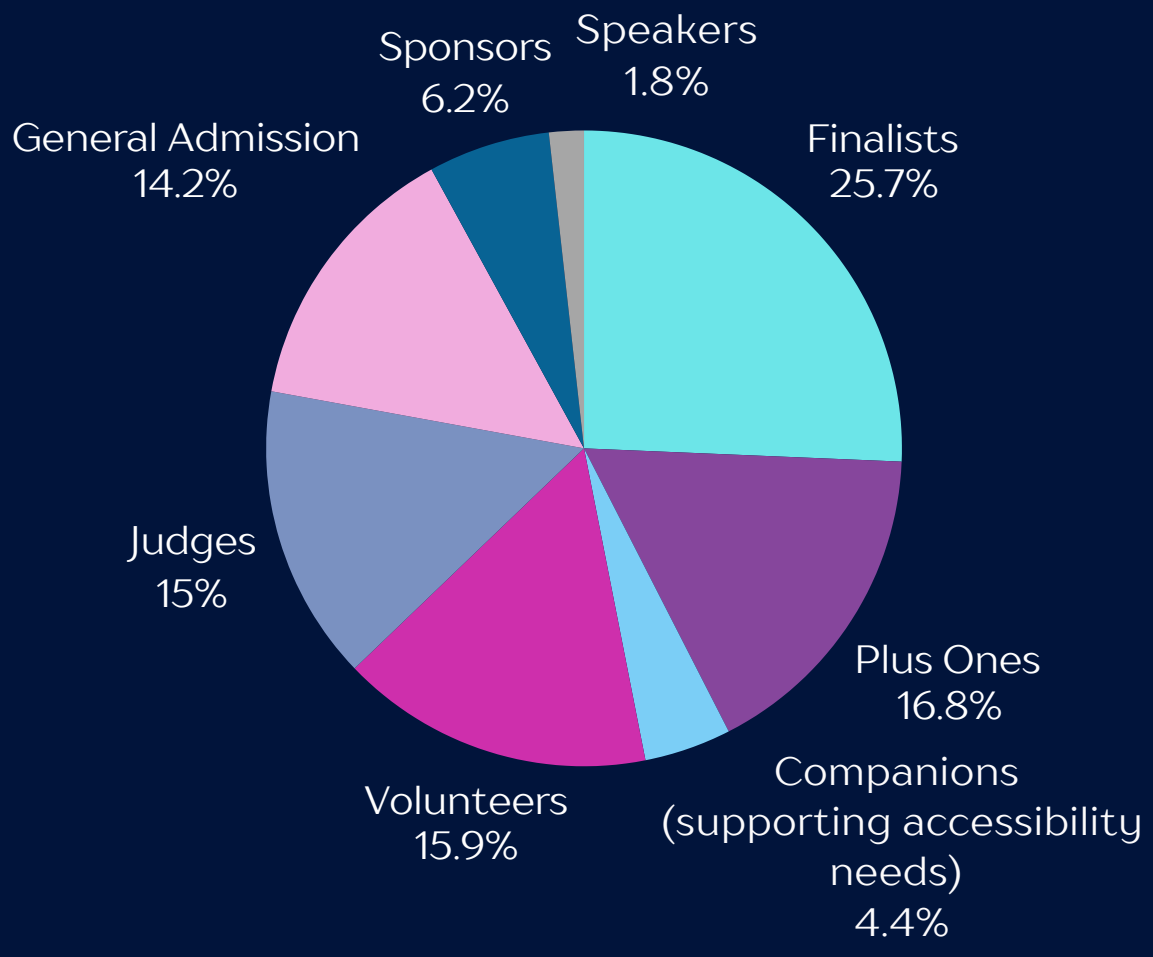
This reflects WiNUK's positive approach to sponsorship as a mutually beneficial collaboration, grounded in shared values and tangible outcomes.

Attendee stats

Attendance at WiNUK Awards 2025 was through pay-as-you-like tickets for in-person and virtual participants. This setup ensured international accessibility whilst maintaining strong in-person engagement.

In-Person	**Virtual**
130 Sign Ups	19 Sign Ups
113 Attended	15 Attended

In-person attendance split:



Virtual attendance split (approximate):
40% finalists, 15% judges, 45% general admission.

Attendee demographics

Attendee demographic questions were included as optional in the ticket booking process and in post-event surveys, collecting up to **84 unique respondents**. Multiple selections per question were allowed.

Location and institution

While the majority of our attendees came from Greater London (45.1%) the event had representation from across **England**, including South England (17.1%: South East, South West, Anglia), North England (12.2%: North West, Yorkshire and the Humber), and the Midlands (8.5%: East and West Midlands), as well as **Scotland** (4.9%) and **Wales** (1.2%).

11% of respondents selected other location or prefer not to say. From the affiliations list we can interpret 'other' as containing international attendees, with affiliations including organisations in the **United States, Italy, China**. Respondents represented **45 different organisation affiliations**, across England, Scotland, Wales and beyond.

Disability

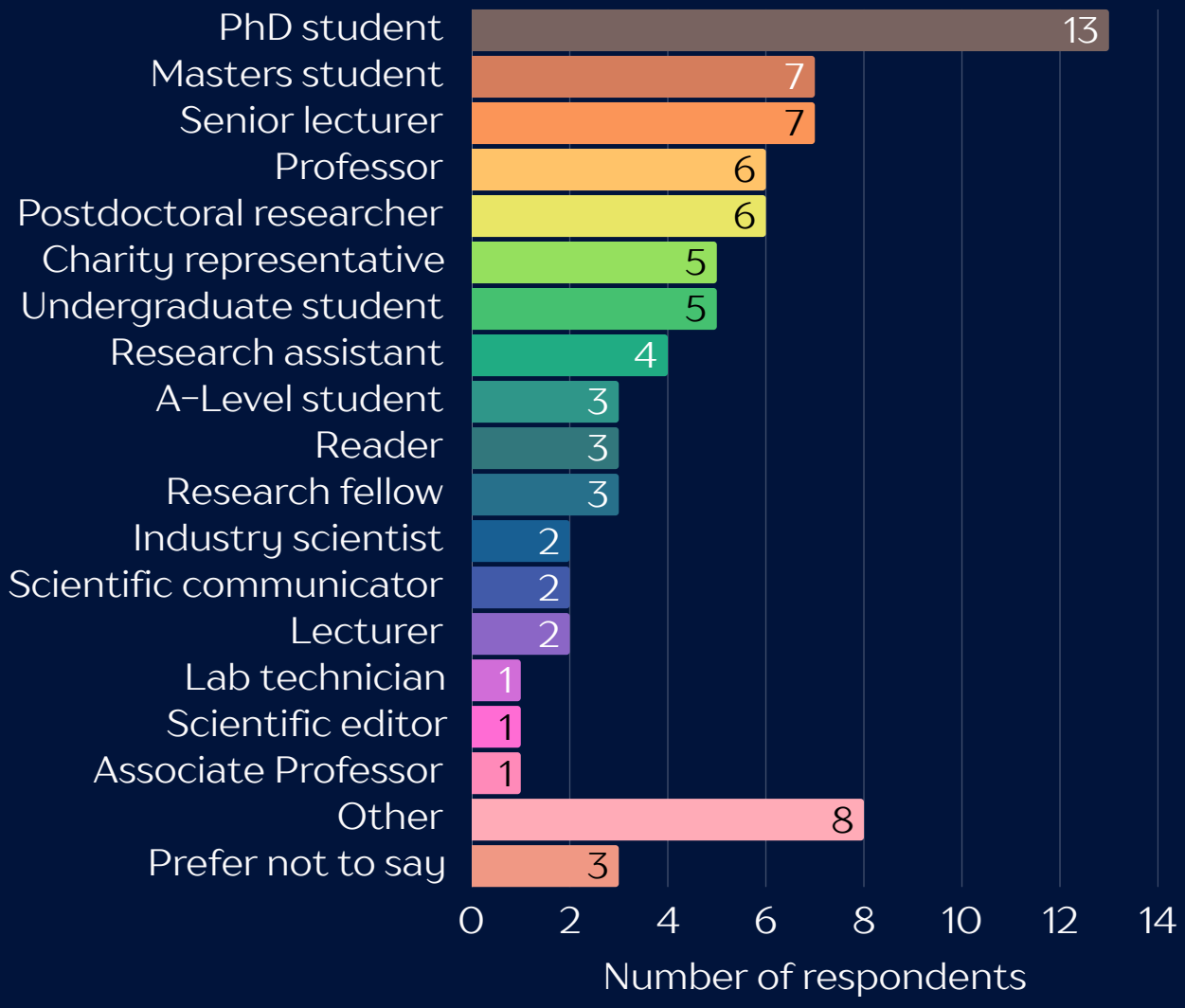
67% of respondents mentioned they did not have a disability or long-term health condition, 23% disclosed that they did. 10% preferred not to say.

WiNUK made efforts to meet pre-disclosed accessibility needs at the event, for example ensuring wheelchair access, no flash photography and dietary requirements. In post-event survey, when asked "If you have accessibility needs, were these adequately supported?", of those who did not select not applicable, 3 of 4 respondents said yes. The respondent who chose no did not elaborate in the free text box.

Attendee demographics

Career stage

WiNUK Awards 2025 attendees **spanned career stages and sectors**, providing encouragement and support across the neuroscience ecosystem.



Academic attendees ranged from students to senior lecturers and professors, featuring a **large proportion of early career researchers**: including 16% PhD students, 8.5% masters, 7.3% post-docs, 6% undergraduate, 3.7% A-level.

Laboratory support staff (research assistants and technicians) attended **alongside attendees in careers outside of academia** (industry scientists, science communicators, editors and charity representatives). Several respondents in the 'Other' category represented finalist supporters, with careers in law, finance and design.

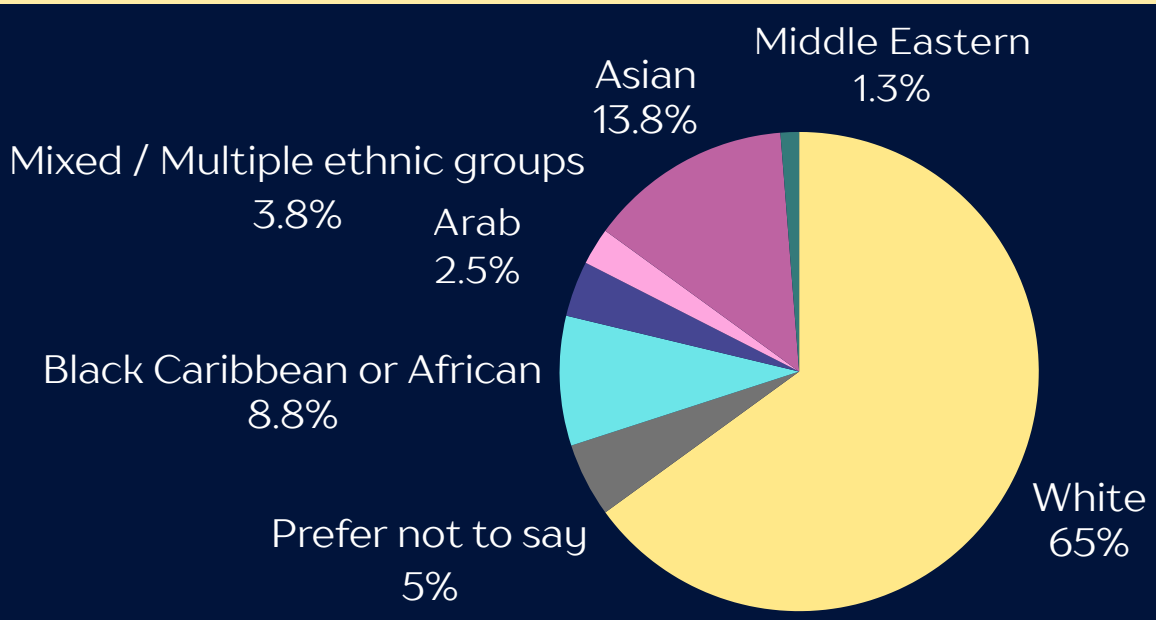
Attendee demographics

WiNUK Awards 2025 attendees represented **diverse identities**, indicating WiNUK's success at promoting diversity and providing inclusive spaces.

Gender

Attendees who responded to our surveys represented a range of genders: **77.9% identified as female**, 12.8% as male, 5.9% as non-binary, 3.5% selected prefer not to say/prefer to self describe.

Ethnicity



Age

The age range of attendees ranged from under 18 to 65 and over, with the greatest number of respondents being in the **25 - 34** age bracket (35% of respondents).

Sexual orientation

70.7% of respondents identified as heterosexual, 9.3% identified as bisexual, 5.3% identified as queer, 1.3% identified as gay, 1.3% identified as pansexual, 12% said they prefer not to say.

Read more about WiNUK Awards 2025 on our web blog:

https://www.womeninneuroscienceuk.org/post/a-night-of-inspiration-inside-the-2025-winuk-awards



Thank you to all involved in survey development, analysis, design and writing to put this report together, notably:

Freya Wardell
Isabella Tugulu
Kirsty Donnachie
Ellie Jackson
Lizzie English
Ginevra Sperandio
Evie Neylon

Let's Continue the Conversation

We'd love to build on the momentum of WiNUK Awards 2025!
We're seeking collaborations to help make this a reality...

WiNUK Day 2026
Our annual conference this year focuses on **neurodiversity**.
Sponsorship opportunities for WiNUK Day 2026 will be shared in the new year, offering a chance to support meaningful dialogue, visibility, and impact across the neuroscience community.

WiNUK Awards 2027
Register your interest early in supporting our next Awards.

Long-Term Partnerships
We welcome annual supporters of our ongoing activities, collaborating towards our vision of inclusive and innovative neuroscience.
Learn more about partnership opportunities by visiting our website: https://www.womeninneuroscienceuk.org/partnership

Additional Opportunities
We're open to creative collaborations, from new in-person events to digital researcher support and community engagement. If you have ideas you'd like to explore, we'd love to hear them!

Get in touch by email at
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