



EDI in Energy Research: from Theory into Practice

**14 January 2026, The Exchange,
Birmingham**

#DiversityInEnergy

Welcome to the EDI in Energy Research: from Theory into Practice Event

We are delighted that you are able to join us.

About the Organisers

EDI+ offers a comprehensive two-year fellowship programme for colleagues working in the energy research community, as well as regular networking and training events.

The Cohort 1 Fellowship programme started in October 2023, and Cohort 2 started in September 2024.

The EDI+ team is comprised of colleagues from Durham University and Northumbria University, all with a passion for improving EDI. We also have an advisory board, who constructively challenge and champion the work of EDI+. Find out more on the [EDI+ web-site](#).

The IGNITE Network+ [Innovation and Growth Needs Inclusion and engagement of all Talent in Energy] is a four-year, £1.25M EPSRC funded initiative aimed at addressing the lack of diversity in energy research by harnessing the talents of researchers from diverse backgrounds.

Led by the University of Strathclyde with partners Imperial College London, the University of Nottingham, the University of Manchester, the University of Bristol, and Brunel University London. Our mission is to support sustainable, abundant, clean and equitable energy for all, by harnessing the talents of energy researchers from all backgrounds. To achieve the changes to energy systems needed to meet net-zero carbon by 2050 requires innovation, and its translation into industry, at pace. Research has shown that diversity in the workforce, if managed effectively, increases innovation, brings greater scientific impact and improves economic growth. Increased diversity in energy researchers will significantly improve our chances of successful transition to net zero by 2050.

Our goal is to foster an inclusive and welcoming culture within the energy research community, ensuring equal opportunities for all, where everyone can thrive regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, family structure, nationality, sexuality, socio-economic background, age, or religious beliefs.

Please consider joining the network if you aren't already a member www.ignitenetplus.ac.uk/jointhenetwork (membership is completely free).

Find out more on the [IGNITE Network web-site](#) and follow IGNITE on social media @IGNITENetPlus – BlueSky, LinkedIn and YouTube.

The Supergen Energy Networks Hub (SEN) is a £9m research project funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC). The hub brings together collaborative teams from Industry,

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Academia, Government and Civil Society to carry out highly impactful, interdisciplinary research, to enable energy networks to become a driving force towards a rapid, safe and just transition to net zero.

The Supergen Energy Networks Hub (SEN) impact focused research programme has been designed around the concept of research missions. Our grand challenge, for energy networks to become a driving force towards a rapid, safe and just transition to net zero.

Our multi-disciplinary mission focussed challenge requires collaborative teams from Industry, Academia, Government and Civil Society to work together to Accelerate, Scale and Deliver real impact. Find out more on the [Supergen Networks Hub web-site](#).

The UK Energy Research Centre carries out world-class, interdisciplinary research into sustainable future energy systems. Our whole systems research programme addresses the challenges and opportunities presented by the transition to a net zero energy system and economy. UKERC is funded by the UK Research and Innovation, Energy Programme. Find out more on the [UKERC web-site](#)

Programme

The Assembly Rooms, The Exchange

09:45 – 10:15	Registration, Coffee & networking
10:15 – 10:30	Welcome and Chair - Prof Simone Abram , Director EDI+ & Executive Director of Durham Energy Institute, Durham University
10:30 – 11:05	Dr Stewart Beattie , Senior Teaching Fellow and Associate Dean, University of Strathclyde - Creating Equitable Routes into the Energy Sector: The Role of Higher Education in Apprenticeship Access (working title)
11:05 – 11:20	Personal Perspective – Cristabel Oforiatta , Senior Modelling Analyst, Energy Systems Catapult and Energyz Black
11:20 – 11:35	Refreshments Break
11:35 – 12:35	In person participants: Conversation stations / Table networking Remote participants: Online Speed networking
12:35 – 13:35	Lunch
13:35 – 13:50	Personal Perspective – Dr Neha Chandarana , (IGNITE network+), Senior Lecturer, University of Bristol
13:50 – 14:50	Discussion panel Q&A (Theme – Building Inclusive Research Cultures) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chair: Prof Sara Walker, Prof of Energy, Co-Director - Energy Demand Research Centre, Co-Director of Birmingham Energy Institute, University of Birmingham• Dr Marco Reggiani (IGNITE Network+), Research Fellow, University of Strathclyde• Dr Sam Williamson (ECR Lead, Supergen Energy Network hub), Lecturer, University of Bristol
14:50 – 15:05	Personal perspective – Dr Natalia Zografou-Barredo , School of Engineering at Newcastle University
15:05 – 15:25	Networking break
15:25 – 16:00	Georgina Worrall OBE , Head of POWERful women - The Shifting Landscape of EDI
16:00 – 16:05	Closing remarks
16:05 – 16:30	Networking

Event Information

Accessibility

As part of our commitment to our EDI it is important that our events are accessible to all. Please let us know if you have any accessibility requirements.

Recording notice

Please note the event will be streamed and recorded, and parts may be published on organiser websites and YouTube subject to speaker approval.

Questions

There will be an opportunity to ask the speakers questions after the presentations and during the panel discussion. In person participants will be able to use the roving mic; online participants can use the chat function which will be read out by a member of the organising team.

In person participants

The Exchange

The Exchange is located in Centenary Square, opposite the Library of Birmingham [[view map](#)].

The Exchange
3 Centenary Square
Birmingham
B1 2DR

For general enquiries about The Exchange please email: info@TheExchange.bham.ac.uk

The event is taking place in the **Assembly rooms**.

Accessibility & Access

The Exchange is committed to being an accessible and inclusive space. There is step-free access and accessible toilets on all floors, and a Changing Places toilet on the Basement level. Guide dogs and assistance animals are welcome.

When visiting the building, we recommend that wheelchair users and those with limited mobility access the venue via Bridge Street, before entering through the North Entrance. This entrance is accessible by ramp and has fully automated doors for easy entry. You'll also find ramp access at the South Entrance, which is located off Bank Court.

Accessible toilets
Hearing loop available
Level access

[Get building accessibility information from AccessAble](#)

You can find the nearest accessible parking via this link to the Birmingham City Council website [Find disabled parking \(Blue badge parking\) | Birmingham City Council](#)

Wi-Fi

The Exchange offers free high-speed Wi-Fi to its visitors.

Photography

We will be taking photos during the event. These images will be used to share news about the event, and to publicise our work. Images may be used in press releases, printed publicity and published on our website and social media. If you would prefer not to be photographed, please let the registration desk know on

arrival. If you would like to see your images, or would like us to delete them, please email us ignitenetplus@strath.ac.uk

Online participants

Zoom

Online attendance will be via Zoom - [link to access zoom](#) [Passcode: 020764] you will be asked to register and will receive the join link.

If the zoom link does not work, you can try copying and pasting the link [https://strath.zoom.us/meeting/register/UaPmJBAlRJ-6Q7MJYTULuA] directly into the address bar. If you are still having difficulty, please email ignitenetplus@strath.ac.uk

Your account will initially be placed into a waiting room. You will join the Zoom event at the official start time of 10:15. Please note that your camera will be turned off and your account will be muted. You will be able switch your camera on and unmute during the networking session.

Speakers

Chair

Prof Simone Abram | EDI+ Director & Director of Durham Energy Institute | Durham University



Professor Simone Abram leads the EPSRC EDI+ Network for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Energy Research. She is professor in Social Anthropology and a Director of Durham Energy Institute with responsibility for embedding social science and humanities in energy research. Current research projects include the Research Centre for Socially Inclusive Energy Transitions, GEMS Geothermal Energy from Mines and Solar-geothermal Heating, Zero-Carbon Emission Integrated Cooling, Heating and Power (ICHP) networks, and Understanding Energy Poverty in Norway (PowerPoor).

She has a DPhil in Social Anthropology and an MEng in Electrical Engineering, and has an extensive record of publications and research on participatory practice in policy-making. She is a founder member of the Fair Energy Consortium, the European Energy Anthropology Network, and was a member of the European centre for women and technology (ECWT). She is Chair of the UK Association of Social Anthropologists and a member of the Academy of Social Sciences/ESRC EDI working group.

Guest Speakers

Dr Stewart Beattie | Senior Teaching Fellow and Associate Dean | University of Strathclyde



Stewart is a Senior Teaching Fellow and Associate Dean for Culture and Inclusion in the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Strathclyde. Stewart's research has focussed on the recruitment and attainment of Apprenticeship Degrees, reflecting his work as Programme Lead in the Civil engineering Graduate apprenticeship in Civil Engineering. Stewart has investigated recruitment pathways into apprenticeships and is expanding his work to investigate the success of apprentices within Higher Education. Stewart is a chartered Geotechnical Engineering with the Institute of Mining. Mineral and materials.

Presentation: Creating Equitable Routes into the Energy Sector: The Role of Higher Education in Apprenticeship Access (working title)

Georgina Worrall OBE | Head of POWERful women



Georgina is the Head of POWERful Women, a professional initiative championing gender diversity at the top of the UK energy sector. In this role, she works directly with energy CEOs and DEI leaders to embed inclusive practices and hold organisations accountable for meaningful progress.

Outside of POWERful Women, Georgina has sat on multiple government-backed energy taskforces, where she has advised on inclusive policy frameworks and governance and speaks at external events on the importance of gender diversity. In 2025, she was awarded an OBE for services to diversity and inclusion in energy and was a recipient of the Rising Stars Editors' Choice Award.

www.powerfulwomen.org.uk

Presentation: - The Shifting Landscape of EDI

Georgina will talk about the challenges the energy sector is facing around EDI in a variety of contexts including gender, geopolitics and culture.

Personal Perspectives

Christabel Ofori-Atta | Senior Modelling Analyst | Energy Systems Catapult



Miss Christabel Ofori-Atta is an energy professional with over 7 years of experience across the energy value chain. She holds an MSc in Sustainable Energy Futures from Imperial College London and a BSc in Petrochemical Engineering from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana.

At present, Christabel is a Senior Modelling Analyst at Energy Systems Catapult in the UK, where she supports local area and national energy planning through a whole energy systems approach. Her work focuses on identifying cost-effective, integrated pathways and actionable strategies for achieving Net Zero.

Before joining the Catapult, she worked in upstream oil and gas operations, notably with Halliburton and Schlumberger, delivering major well testing and completions projects across West Africa, especially in Ghana and Nigeria. She later joined Alten Limited UK, supporting Rolls-Royce in project management and developing model-based systems engineering and software design solutions to improve fuel efficiency and performance in civil and business jet aero-engines.

Christabel is passionate about innovation, sustainability, digitalisation, and decarbonisation, and is committed to advancing STEM engagement and inclusion, particularly among young people. She brings a unique perspective that bridges traditional energy systems with emerging low-carbon technologies, helping to turn visionary ideas into impactful, real-world solutions

Dr Neha Chandarana | Senior Lecturer | University of Bristol



Dr Neha Chandarana, is a Co-Investigator with the IGNITE Network+ and a Senior Lecturer in Bio-based and Sustainable Composites at the University of Bristol's School of Civil, Aerospace and Design Engineering. Neha leads the IGNITE Prescribed Activity 5 mentoring and advocacy deliverable. Neha is currently also Athena Swan Lead for the Faculty of Science and Engineering at Bristol.



Dr Natalia Zografou-Barredo, PhD, is a Research Associate in Energy Systems at the School of Engineering in Newcastle University. She works in research and innovation projects with industry, academia, and more recently, energy regulation. Her research focuses on climate and energy systems resilience, and spans across hydrogen integration and whole energy systems. Natalia was awarded the competitive EPSRC Doctoral Prize Fellowship to continue research after her PhD studies and recently completed a 3-month secondment at Ofgem, the GB energy regulator. Currently she

is co-leading the £500K EPSRC-funded research project ResTORES on resilience of offshore energy systems and leading work under the £9m EPSRC Supergen Energy Networks Hub project.

Discussion Panel

- **Panel Chair**

Professor Sara Walker | Director energy Institute | University of Birmingham



Professor Sara Walker is a leading expert in whole energy systems and the energy transition at the University of Birmingham, where she is Director of Birmingham Energy Institute. She has been working in the energy sector since 1996, with a career spanning industry and academia. Her research focus is on renewable energy and energy efficiency in buildings, energy policy, energy resilience, and more recently she has focused on whole energy systems.

Professor Walker leads on a number of large research initiatives. She is Director of the EPSRC Hub on Hydrogen Integration for Accelerated Energy Transitions (HI-ACT), and Co-Director of the EPSRC Energy Demand Research Centre. She is also involved in the Supergen Network Plus on Renewable Energy and AI. This portfolio of research has a value of over £20m. Her expertise and experience enables her to engage in advisory and consultancy roles, including as Advisory Committee Member for the UK Energy Research Centre and the UK CCS Research Centre, and as Member of the EPSRC Scientific Advisory Committee for Energy and Decarbonisation. In 2025, she was appointed as a Member of the Science and Technology Advisory Committee to the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).

- **Panellists**

Dr Marco Reggiani | Researcher Fellow | University of Strathclyde



Dr Marco Reggiani is an interdisciplinary researcher at the University of Strathclyde. His works address topics of inclusivity in STEM, intersectionality, gender and sexuality in higher education, as well as urban and regional (re)vitalisation, sustainability, and just transitions.



Sam Williamson (he/him) has been researching energy systems for the past 15 years collaborating with partners in Nepal, Brazil, and West Africa to understand the opportunities of local renewable energy systems in the energy transition. He works in interdisciplinary teams and co-produces research with communities and local stakeholders. He is a Col on the Supergen Energy Networks Hub, responsible for the Early Career Researcher committee. He also leads the Sustainable, Holistic, and Inclusive Energy Systems for Well-being project, working with partners in Ghana, The Gambia, Brazil, Nepal and South Africa, looking to develop an energy system design framework to improve the impact of an energy system on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Conversation Stations

The Conversation Stations offer a relaxed and informal setting to connect with colleagues while exploring the exciting projects within the EDI+ and IGNITE Network+. Each table will feature a specific project and accommodate up to six participants. Sessions run for one hour, divided into two 30-minute rotations, giving you the chance to join different discussions and broaden your insights.

Projects [click on the link to find out more or scroll through the projects below]

- [Coaching and mentoring in line management](#)
- [Energising Equity: Co-developing a Framework for the inclusion of neurodivergent energy researchers](#)
- [Enhancing Inclusion: Evaluating, Co-Creating, and Implementing Effective Practices to Address Barriers for LGBTQ+ Researchers in STEM and Energy](#)
- [Inclusive Pathways into Academia for Non-Traditional Students](#)
- [Navigating Allyship and Influence: Practical Realities of Driving EDI Change](#)

Conversation title: Coaching and mentoring in line management

Dr Dominika Zabiega | Assistant Professor | Northumbria University



Dominika is an Assistant Professor in Mechanical and Construction Engineering at Northumbria University, with She specializes in porous material development, nanotechnology, and environmental sustainability. Her collaborative ethos, aligned with **EDI values**, is evident in commitment to ethics in engineering, contributing to academic citizenship, innovative teaching and leadership roles, as well as in research. She is actively involved in **EDI** initiatives internationally and holds an EPSRC EDI+ Energy Fellowship.

Conversation Title: Energising Equity: Co-developing a Framework for the inclusion of neurodivergent energy researchers

Dr Vanda Papafilippou | Senior Lecturer | University of the West of England



About the presenter: Dr Vanda Papafilippou is a Senior Lecturer in Human Resources Management at UWE Bristol and is specialised in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace. Her research has focused on engineering and she conducted studies on women engineers and to which extent formal internal or external women's networks contribute to gender equality within the organisation and the wider profession, self-initiated expatriate engineers from South Europe and how they adapt within and outside the workplace, as well as two studies on neurodiversity in engineering and neurodiversity in the energy sector. She has also developed and delivered training for SMEs in the creative sector and larger organisations through UWE's Executive Education on inclusive recruitment and selection and did a policy evaluation for the NHS Leadership Academy.

Conversation Title: Enhancing Inclusion: Evaluating, Co-Creating, and Implementing Effective Practices to Address Barriers for LGBTQ+ Researchers in STEM and Energy

Dr Fabio Fasoli | University of Surrey and **Dr Marco Reggiani** | Research Fellow | University of Strathclyde



Dr Fabio Fasoli is a Senior Lecturer in Social Psychology and the co-director of the Sex, Gender, and Sexualities Research Centre at the University of Surrey. His research explores language and communication as tools for fostering inclusivity and examines EDI strategies in academia, including the implementation of Narrative CVs.



Dr Marco Reggiani is an interdisciplinary researcher at the University of Strathclyde. His works address topics of inclusivity in STEM, intersectionality, gender and sexuality in higher education, as well as urban and regional (re)vitalisation, sustainability, and just transitions.

Conversation Title: Inclusive Pathways into Academia for Non-Traditional Students

Dr Claudia Matz | Centre Manager | University of Nottingham



I am part of the second cohort of EDI+ Fellows at the University of Durham, where my research focuses on improving the postgraduate journey through inclusive interventions, particularly for mature and part time students. Join me to discuss how we can better support mature and part time postgraduates, and on creating neurodivergent inclusive events for all students and staff.

I am a microbiologist by training and worked in industry for a while before returning to academia in a managerial role. I work as Centre Manager for an EPSRC funded Centre for Doctoral Training at the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Nottingham and oversee the complete student journey from recruitment to liaising with our fabulous alumni. One of the parts of my role I enjoy most is the direct contact with students.

I contribute to the Faculty of Engineering's EDI Committee and its student focused subgroup and am the co chair of Engineering's staff Neurodiversity Task and Finish Group. Nationally, I am a committee member of the PRISM (Professional Research Investment and Strategy Managers) Network and a member of its training group, helping to shape professional development opportunities for research managers.

I am part of the second cohort of EDI+ Fellows at the University of Durham, where my research explores ways to improve the postgraduate journey through inclusive interventions, with a particular focus on the experiences of mature and part time students. I am the only professional services member of my cohort, and I greatly value the opportunity this Fellowship has given me to engage with research that will hopefully make a difference to the student journey.

Conversation Title: Navigating Allyship and Influence: Practical Realities of Driving EDI Change

Dr Lennie Foster | Centre Manager | Loughborough University

Drawing on my experience developing practical resources such as the Embedding EDI Toolkit, inclusive event guidance, and inclusive communications guidance, as well as reflections on the realities of championing EDI within research cultures. My aim is to share honest insights—what’s effective, what’s challenging—and invite participants to explore strategies for embedding EDI without adding unnecessary burden. We can also touch on emerging issues like AI and bias, and how networks can support sustainable change.






Lennie Foster is Centre Manager for the UK SCALE project, driving innovation in supply chain education and industry engagement. As an **EDI+ Fellow**, Lennie has championed inclusive practices through the creation of an **EDI Toolkit** and practical guidance to embed equality, diversity, and inclusion across projects. They coordinate high-profile events, including annual symposia, webinars, and roundtables, and foster global collaboration through partnerships with MIT and UK

SCALE’s network. Lennie brings creativity to engagement activities, designing unique approaches that make complex supply chain topics accessible and engaging. Outside work, Lennie enjoys craft brewing and experimenting with session IPAs.

Online Speed Networking

The online speed networking is designed for remote participants who want to engage in conversation with colleagues in a relaxed, informal setting. This is your space to connect and learn from each other—whether you're new to EDI or experienced in the field. You'll meet new people, exchange perspectives, and explore topics around Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

How it works

-  **Duration:** 1 hour
-  **Format:** Three 20-minute rotations
-  **Group size:** Up to 4 participants per virtual room

You'll join different rooms, meet a variety of people, and take part in open conversations.

Camera optional. Captions available. Choose questions that feel comfortable—there are no right or wrong answers.

Session Goal: Connect, share perspectives, and learn from each other.

Suggested Icebreaker Questions (choose one):

- What inspired you to join today's event?
- What's one thing you're curious to learn from others in this session?

Suggested Conversation Starters:

- What does inclusion mean to you in your day-to-day work?
- How do you see diversity benefiting your team or organisation?
- What small changes could make your workplace more welcoming?
- How can leaders and colleagues better support underrepresented groups?
- What role does communication play in creating an inclusive culture?

/More prompts will be shared during the session.

Want to keep the conversation going? Share your contact details or connect on LinkedIn to continue the dialogue.

The Exchange, Location Map

