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Take-aways

- Interest in welcoming new postdocs ‘face-to-face’
- Demand for departmental social events
- Not surprisingly, many people reported having worse mental health and wellbeing since the pandemic
- Postdoc lunches restarted
- Interest in ‘Postdoc clubs’ initiative
- Need to disseminate information on the available resources and mechanisms for addressing potential issues with supervisor/colleague
1. Welcoming

Q: Do you think it would be useful to organise an informal virtual welcoming chat with members of the committee to new postdocs?

![Pie chart showing response distribution]

**Result/Action:** As the vast majority of respondents (>80%) felt positive about this, we will aim to organize virtual welcoming event every ~3 months to help new postdocs getting settled in the department. The first one will be in April/May and we will invite all the new postdocs who joined in 2020-2021.

**Representative:** Eftychios (ef391@cam.ac.uk)
2. Postdoc lunches

Our Postdoc lunches, where invited speakers present a topic or share their experience, continue to be quite popular events in the department. Similar to last year’s survey responses, the most requested topics were:
- research fellowships,
- grants and research initiatives, and
- career development.

Q: Would you be interested in attending virtual postdoc lunch sessions with invited speakers?

Q: Which of the following topics would be of most interest to you?

Postdoc lunches have officially restarted on 09/04/2021. The first one was on the topic of wellbeing.

Representative: Indu (is438@cam.ac.uk). Probably Eva (eh642@cam.ac.uk) and Mandana (sm2343@cam.ac.uk) will take over from September.
3. Peer-to-peer support scheme

In last year’s survey we got a suggestion of running an informal peer support scheme in our department. As a follow up from that, in this survey we have asked postdocs how they would feel about this.

Result: Most respondents (59%) would be interested in joining a peer-to-peer support scheme (the small group option in particular). The most popular choices as topics for the scheme were:
- career development, and
- grants and mentorship

Q: Do you imagine yourself signing up for something like this in the near future?
Q: What kind of scheme would you like to be implemented?

![Pie chart showing preferences for scheme implementation]

Q: Which topics would you be most interested in (select 1 to 4 topics)?

![Bar chart showing topics of interest]

**Action:** Soon we will be launching a pilot for a “Postdoc Club” scheme – a space to share experiences among peers. The first will probably be about fellowships.

In recent discussions with the committee and our Wellbeing rep Jeongmin, we would also like to offer a "social bubble" option, where groups of 3-5 postdocs regularly join just to chat and check on each other, without a specific topic of discussion.

**Representative:** Gonzalo (gim23@cam.ac.uk)
4. Virtual Social Events

Q: Will you be likely to attend future social events?

It’s great to see that lots of you are keen on joining virtual social events!

**Action:** Postdocs in the department are already planning a few social events (e.g. Postdoc happy hour, game nights... etc). So, stay tuned!

**Representatives:** Eva (eh642@cam.ac.uk) and Mandana (sm2343@cam.ac.uk)
5. Wellbeing

Not surprisingly, we can see that the pandemic has indeed taken a toll on postdoc's wellbeing. For example, compared to pre-pandemic levels, there were about 6 times more people reporting worse than better mental health. This is therefore an important issue for many postdocs. The question is how can we, as a postdoc community, help ourselves and each other to improve this – at least a tiny bit.

Q: How is your mental-health and wellbeing compared to before the pandemic?

We’ve also learned that our dissemination of wellbeing information at the department newsletter and MS teams has not worked as expected.

Q: Wellbeing resources are provided in the department through the newsletter linked to the MS Teams Channel. Was this helpful to you?
Action:
- Our social reps are organizing events!
- Our Wellbeing rep, Jeongmin, is looking on how to disseminate wellbeing resources more effectively and she is thinking about organizing a departmental "exercise" challenge such as 5K walking or running.

Representative: Jeongmin (jc913@cam.ac.uk)
6. Relation with co-workers and supervisor

Q: If you were to experience a problem with a colleague of your PI, where and how would you seek support?

The answers suggest that it is not clear what action to take in these situations.

**Action:** the postdoc committee asked advice to Catherine Butler and below is the possible way to resolve issues:

- Catherine’s ([cek31@cam.ac.uk](mailto:cek31@cam.ac.uk)) door is always open – as an independent person from the PI-supervised relation (she can help to bring people together, informally, and try to sort problems out).

- HR team can get involved if something more formal is needed (Catherine can help if this step is needed)

- Dignity work policy ([https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/policies-procedures/dignity-work-policy/sources-support](https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/policies-procedures/dignity-work-policy/sources-support))

- Mediation service ([https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/policies-procedures/mediation-service#:~:text=The%20University%20of%20Cambridge%20uses%20to%20improve%20difficult%20working%20relationships](https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/policies-procedures/mediation-service))

- Other useful resources:
  - Managing challenging conversations: online course ([https://www.training.cam.ac.uk/cppd/course/cppd-challconv](https://www.training.cam.ac.uk/cppd/course/cppd-challconv))
  - Online professional development ([https://www.postdocacademy.cam.ac.uk/online-professional-development](https://www.postdocacademy.cam.ac.uk/online-professional-development))
7. Other

**Issue:** place to have lunch in the department during lockdown events:

**Action:** the postdoc committee asked advice to Catherine Butler and below is the possible way to resolve issues:

- Everybody should have been allocated a R&R space (and it should be used to have lunch).
- If not sure about it, please contact your group leader, colleagues or Catherine Butler.