

# RESEARCH-CHARITY COLLABORATION PUTS PREGNANCY RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE

## A CASE STUDY



## Dr Victoria Salmon

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When university researcher Dr Victoria (Tori) Salmon built a collaboration between Health Innovation South West and WILD, a charity supporting young parent families, it was an opportunity for her research to feel more relevant and accessible for young mothers. Through her work with APPEAL, an evidence-based training programme helping midwives teach pelvic floor muscle exercises during pregnancy, Tori demonstrates how effective collaboration between researchers and charities can be an important path that transforms research into action.

My route into research was perhaps a little less conventional than a lot of academics. After training in physiotherapy and working as a clinician, I moved on to be a professional practice advisor with the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. It was at this time that the opportunity arose to do a PhD at the University of the West of England. I hadn't considered academia until that point; I didn't want to go back to being a student. But the study's focus aligned so closely with my interests that it was too good an opportunity to pass up. The PhD focused on physical activity to manage fatigue for rheumatoid arthritis patients. And so started my journey into academia...

My PhD, perhaps uniquely at the time, centred largely on patient engagement and experience, which felt natural to me, having worked so closely with patients previously. I think this emphasis on collaboration and engaging with those directly impacted by my research strengthened the success of the project and is something that I have maintained throughout my career.

## TOP TIPS

- **Be curious** about what non-academic work is going on in your field and consider where your research would fit.
- **Be brave!** Have conversations with people in your field both within and beyond academia.
- **Seek out other academics who are already working beyond academia.** Your university's innovation department is a great resource for this.