



SPARC

Strategic Promotion of Ageing Research Capacity

A special programme funded by EPSRC and BBSRC

Second ANNUAL Report 2006-2007

Workshops

Advocacy

Awards



The SPARC Call 2 Award Holders

Background

Objectives

This is the second Annual Report on SPARC (Strategic Promotion of Ageing Research Capacity).

SPARC has two primary objectives:

Capacity Building

- Facilitating the development of the capacity of the UK science base to undertake engineering, design and biologically-orientated ageing-related research.
- Initiating closer links between individuals who undertake, or seek to undertake, ageing research activities with the support of BBSRC and EPSRC.
- Providing financial support for small scale projects to academics who wish to establish themselves in ageing-related research.

Integrated networking

- Networking and supporting interdisciplinary areas of ageing research such that their value to the national research effort as a whole is both maximised and communicated.
- Strengthening the relationship between the research community and research end-users including the great variety of organisations which support older people.
- Contributing to the creation of a coherent, accessible and internationally competitive UK ageing research programme that meets the needs of older people, and is valued by policy-makers, practitioners and other relevant stakeholders

Activities

SPARC is pursuing its objectives through three principal activities:

- A series of national **workshops** and some international workshops which variously showcase the latest research and developments to all stakeholders and bring together leading scientists to exchange ideas and discuss new avenues for research.
- Vigorous **advocacy** of the value of ageing research, and need for it, to policy makers and policy influencers.
- The development and operation of a **small awards scheme** to pump-prime the work of newcomers to ageing research.

Resources

SPARC is funded by EPSRC and BBSRC, managed by a secretariat of two teams comprising a director and coordinator, based at the Universities of Reading and Brighton, and advised by a committee of experts with an independent Chair. Representatives of relevant NGOs and Research Council representatives also serve on the Committee. The members of the secretariat and the Advisory Committee are given in Appendix 1.

SPARC had an initial research grant of £1.4m with funding divided between the three principal activities, but during the year this was supplemented with a further £0.4m. A large portion of the funds, £1.3m, has been allocated to the small awards scheme. The awards have been distributed as a result of competitive research proposals made by researchers from universities across the UK. Because SPARC is time limited these small projects have to be completed before the end of SPARC to allow the success of SPARC to be properly judged.

Although the SPARC grant was designed to support the secretariat for three years, careful husbandry of resources will enable the secretariat to operate for most of the formal period of the grant, which is four years. This additional period will enable SPARC to run more workshops and to accommodate any projects which experience delays.



HRH The Princess Royal Addresses the SPARC/COT Workshop on Occupational Therapy and Ageing Research

The Second Year

SPARC was announced in October 2004 and launched on 1st January 2005 although confirmation of funding was not received until 1st April 2005. The first annual report covered a 14 month period from 1st January 2005 until 28th February 2006. This second report covers 13 months from 1st March 2006 to 31st March 2007 to link with the annual funding cycle.

Maintaining Momentum

In its first year the main aim for SPARC was to create an awareness of its activities so as to attract high quality proposals to its awards scheme, the participation of all user groups in its workshops and a position of influence with policy makers. By the end of the first year these had been achieved. During that period the awards scheme was established, leading to 13 SPARC awards, nine workshops were held, and a useful rapport developed with policy makers. Amongst other achievements SPARC initiated a Parliamentary question about the older worker. Significantly, in its first year SPARC experienced considerable encouragement and goodwill from researchers and practitioners with an interest in ageing.

In the second year the challenge has been to build on that goodwill and the initial good progress, so as to make further awards, provide a range of workshops designed to appeal to different stakeholders in ageing, and ensure that the skills, knowledge, enthusiasm and optimism of SPARC was known to and available to those who make and influence policy makers. During the year, 21 further awards were made, 14 workshops held, links with government departments and charities strengthened and a further parliamentary question, on science funding, initiated.



SPARC/RSC Radical Chemistry Workshop Organisers

Membership

SPARC membership quite simply involves an individual registering their interest in SPARC activities so that they can receive email messages about forthcoming events and other activities as well as news items. There are now approaching 1500 members and membership continues to grow steadily, a rise of 200% during the year, usually as a result of the publicity associated with workshops. During the year the mail list for the EQUAL Research Network ceased, contributing about half of the new members. Regrettably some EQUAL members did not transfer, because, unlike EQUAL, SPARC does not deal specifically with disability issues. It is a cause for concern amongst these former EQUAL and some existing SPARC members that presently the Research Councils no longer provide a specific research focus for disability issues. Some regret the way in which a concern for ageing has narrowed the broader mission of social inclusion which was embodied in the EQUAL Initiative, and the heavy weather which has ensued for some researchers as a result of this more limiting remit. Just as the earlier concern with social inclusion facilitated a broader sphere of activity and avoided unhelpful labels of ageing and disability, so a concern for the life course might overcome some of the unfortunate and unintended consequences of the term ageing.

Workshops

Fifteen workshops were held during the period covered by this report, several in collaboration with other organisations. Support was also provided by SPARC to a conference organised independently by the Institution of Engineering and Technology. The style of the workshops has varied greatly. In addition to the standard workshop pattern (for example, the workshops on *Transport, Dementia, Old and Active*) based on a programme which is attractive to scientists, practitioners, older people and other stakeholders, *Ageing and Occupational Therapy* was designed for health professionals, *Radical Chemistry* was organised specifically for scientists and *Research for a Better Age* aimed to appeal particularly to older people. There were two SPARC Award Holders' Workshops, which were by invitation only, and two workshops to support the research community in their efforts to secure support for their research (*Proposal Writing, FP7*).

Workshops 2006-2007

- **Award Holder's Workshop** Host: University of Reading. 27th March 2006
- **Chemistry of Ageing III** Host: Royal Society of Chemistry, London. 21st April 2006
- **Accessibility - UK/EU experts and POLIS partners** Host: Building Research Establishment, Watford. 18th May 2006
- **Transatlantic collaboration and young grant holders in ageing** Held within the American Aging Association Conference on *Intervention in Aging and Age Related Diseases*, Boston, USA. 2nd-5th June 2006
- **Ageing: Is it all bad news?** European Science Open Forum Meeting, Munich, Germany, Host: Royal Society of Chemistry, 16th July 2006,
- **Research for a Better Age** Host: Research into Ageing, Eastbourne, 9th October 2006
- **Transport and Older People** Host: ITS, University of Leeds, 26th October 2006
- **SPARC Proposal Writing Workshop** Eastbourne, 23rd November 2006
- **Dementia and Cognitive impairment - new perspectives in research, practice and caring**, Host: Eli Lilly, a joint workshop with TVLSN, Windlesham, 29th November 2006
- **Award Holder's Workshop**. Host: University of Reading, 11th January 2007
- **Old and Active: Maintaining the older person's health, activity and employment**, a joint workshop with LARCI, Birmingham, 8th February 2007
- **Ageing Research Funding Opportunities in Framework 7** Host: Birmingham University, joint workshop with BCA, 12th February 2007
- **Ageing Research and Occupational Therapy**, Host: College of Occupational Therapists, A joint workshop with COT, 20th March 2007
- **Werner's Syndrome Consortium**, Tokyo, 17-22nd March 2007
- **Radical Chemistry and Biology**, Host: RSC, Glasgow, 30th March 2007

SPARC also provided advice and support for a major conference

- **Our Ageing Society: The Challenges of Appropriate, Supportive Technology**, *Institution of Engineering and Technology, London. 31st January 2007*

Participants

The number of participants and their distribution across different stakeholder groups at the workshops has varied, reflecting the nature of the events. Several workshops have shown that it is possible to attract large numbers of non-academic stakeholders, especially to those events which have a strong focus on health issues combined with either a professional practice or business dimension.

Royal Patronage

Whilst all workshops were distinctive in terms of their focus and range of speakers, and each achieved a very high standard, there is insufficient space to review all of them. However, special mention is appropriate for the *Ageing and Occupational Therapy* workshop hosted by the College of Occupational Therapists which was attended by HRH The Princess Royal.

Her Royal Highness addressed the workshop on *The importance of design to help people live independently at home* and later spoke with all participants about their research and professional activities.

SPARC is extremely grateful to the College for its support and delighted that it should introduce Her Royal Highness, who is the Patron of the College of Occupational Therapists, to SPARC and that this should result in such active and widespread support of the mission of SPARC.

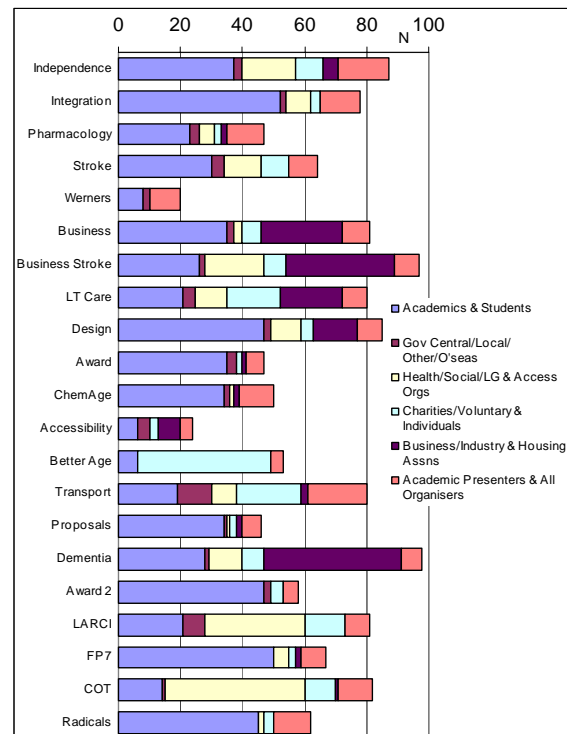


Figure 1: Number of Participants at each Workshop, workshops in first two years

Notes: a. Towards the Integrative Biology of Premature Ageing was a small residential workshop in which the majority of delegates attended by invitation so are not included. However some free places were available to the wider community. b. Details are not available for some international activities.

International Workshops

There were four international workshops. A workshop, showcasing the work of UK young researchers was held within the AAA Conference in Boston. This event, opened by HM Consul-General John Rankin, was attended by 150 people and followed by joint presentations by BBSRC and NIA. It has led to the prospect of a major collaboration with the USA. A public briefing on the UK perspective on ageing was organised in Munich. A workshop for UK and EU experts on accessibility was hosted by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) and one on Werner's syndrome was held in Tokyo.

The proposal for SPARC included an intention to run six international workshops during the life of SPARC. One of these was held in the first year and four this year. In addition BBSRC support has been secured for a workshop on Cell Senescence in 2008, a small design-related event is planned in Canada at the FICCDAT conference in June 2007, and discussions are taking with both EPSRC and BBSRC for support for workshops in Australia and Canada in 2008.

Feedback

Written feedback from the workshops has been consistently positive and similar to that received in the first year. The format of the general workshops provides:

- a relaxed yet structured environment for the presentation of material which can be quite technical but because of the mixture of presentations, is not over-burdensome for those who are not specialists;
- plenty of opportunity for networking with what is usually considered to be a refreshing and unusual range of participants (this is assisted by extensive advance information about those participants);
- professionally organised events with a sensitivity for the needs of all stakeholders and the requirements of specific participants (which can be quite demanding)
- a valuable focus on the needs of particular interest groups (for example, pharmaceutical firms, local authorities, occupational therapists).

The feedback from those workshops which have been principally for researchers has generally endorsed their focus of information provision, skills development and networking. The international events have generated strong feedback on the value of showcasing

UK research, which has been extremely well received. Some European scientists have remarked at how much of the work which has been presented at these international events must be "some of the UK's best kept secrets". Although the intense interest in UK research is always welcome and reinforce the reasons for establishing SPARC, these comments underline concerns about the poor representation of design, engineering and biological ageing research in Europe over the last decade.

A summary of the feedback from the participants over the life of SPARC is given in Figures 2 and 3.

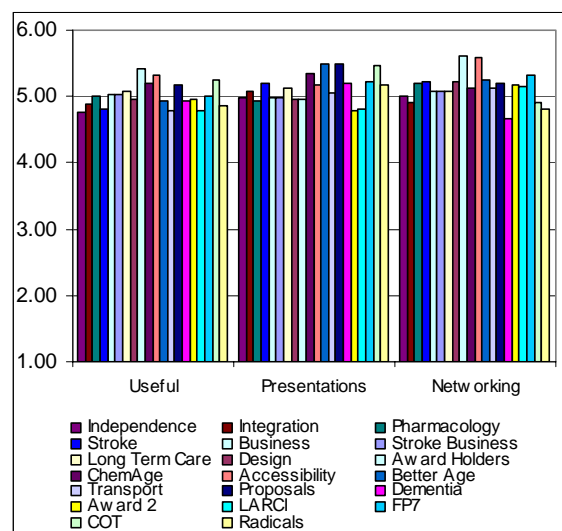


Figure 2: Participants' Evaluation of Workshops (average scores) (Scores 1 – very poor, 2 – poor, 3 – unsure, 4 – good, 5 – very good, 6 excellent) Details not available for some international activities

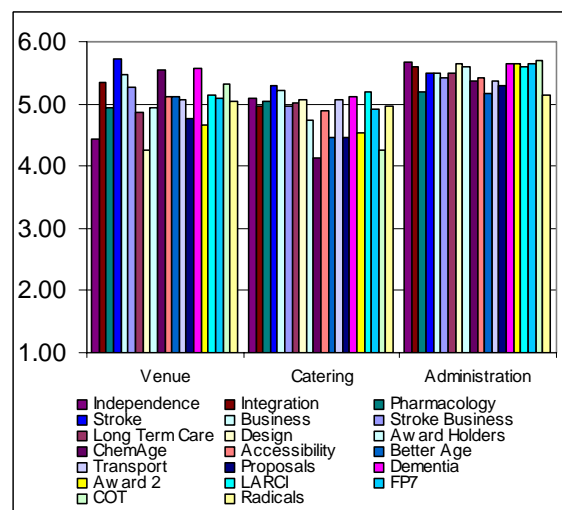


Figure 3: Participants' Evaluation of Administrative Aspects (average scores)

Organisational Issues

In the previous annual report it was noted that although the vast majority of participants recognise the shoe-string nature of the workshops, that hosts have limited resources and that speakers give their time freely, there is always a minority of requests for facilities which would outstrip SPARC's resources. We have persevered with attempting to meet these requests. For example, whilst printed handouts of presentations are not provided we make a greater effort to inform participants that most presentations will be available on the SPARC website within a few days of an event. Some workshops have had break-out groups which have worked reasonably well when the mix of stakeholder interests has not been too broad, but the weight of opinion is that the time is better used for information transfer via presentations. Complaints about venues have been less frequent, probably as many buildings are now DDA compliant, but those about catering have increased reflecting a growing awareness of hygiene and healthy eating.

More frequent workshops

As with the previous year, there have been many requests to expand the number and size of workshops. All stakeholders have commented on being "*starved of the opportunity to hear about the latest research*" and to "*network with other interested parties*". Large conferences are unsatisfactory meeting places and cannot be afforded by many, for example, those who work for the health and social services and charities or by older people or researchers; too often they have "*the same old faces and spiel*". Also many of the recent ageing research conferences which have been free to attend have been criticised for being "*purely showcase launches with too much rhetoric*", "*the usual members of the inner circle*", and "*not enough about what ageing research is able to contribute*".

SPARC's response will be to organise, in collaboration with others, more workshops than originally planned, although the number will be limited by what it can afford. However, it will not increase the size of the workshops for fear of losing the air of informality, friendliness and progressive development which are so much of the spirit of SPARC.

Helping Others

SPARC's other approach is to encourage more organisations to run workshops which SPARC will help to promote on their behalf. During the year we have facilitated a number of small events and one major conference. This was the conference run by IET in January. At a very early stage, and on the recommendation of Mrs Elizabeth Mills, Chair of the SPARC Advisory Committee, the Directors advised IET on speakers for the event and on the ways and means of reaching the mixed audience which was required. Subsequently SPARC helped with the promotion of the event, ensuring that the industry and the engineering community which is involved with IET was more than well matched by a large number of participants from a full range of other backgrounds. The conference, with a keynote speech from Lord Winston and a platform well populated by major contributors to the EQUAL Initiative, was a major success and has contributed greatly to the standing of SPARC as well as its membership.

Reflections

Appeal

Last year it was reported that SPARC had established a broad membership. It appealed to disparate interests and motivations, linked by an underlying concern, desire and even anxiety to hear about the latest developments and challenges and to keep up to date. This appeal has been preserved, as evidenced by the considerable growth in membership from a full range of backgrounds.

This has not been an easy task. The range of interests covered by SPARC is considerable. As it is impossible to cover all of these in, say, a single workshop during the year we have made every attempt to ensure a clear focus to each workshop, and to advertise that focus so as to avoid misunderstandings about the content and culture of an event. Thus, there has been a clear differentiation between workshops primarily for researchers, those primarily for older people and those for all comers. Of course our preference is for the all comers workshops because these most effectively capture the spirit of SPARC, but the other types are vital if we are to strengthen the research community and to demonstrate a belief in value of different types of dissemination event to a generally sceptical research community.

Bottom-up

To a large extent we have been helped by a philosophy of not mounting workshops in areas which the Directors think will be of interest but by collaborating with those who earnestly wish to host workshops in their own areas of particular interest, and for which manifestly there is demand. SPARC is a bottom-up community driven activity, it encourages and responds because it recognises that it derives its strength from the enthusiasm and commitment of its members. Next year there will be even more workshops demonstrating the value of responding to the expressed needs of stakeholders in ageing rather than second guessing these or suggesting those topics which they should be interested in.

However, as SPARC moves towards its final phase it will be important that all 34 SPARC projects are showcased. Thus, we will be encouraging those opportunities which contribute to a platform for the very mixed portfolio of SPARC projects.

Developing research skills

A specific aim of SPARC is to build UK capacity for ageing research. With 34 projects funded by SPARC accounting for over 100 investigators and researchers, and a further 100 collaborators, advisers and mentors, currently SPARC is the largest research council ageing research activity. In addition, with a substantial proportion of its members being researchers and a further large number receiving its regular emails, it has been in a good position to offer development opportunities for the research community. It has done this through two workshops, one on the writing of research proposals, where SPARC's two sponsoring research councils and Research into Ageing took the platform, and the other in conjunction with BCA, a briefing on the EU Framework 7, given by leading authorities from the research councils, universities and academia. There is a strong demand for more workshops of this type, although future opportunities through SPARC will be limited by need to promote the outcomes of the SPARC projects.

Skills development has also been a theme of the two award holders' workshops, which have brought together SPARC team members for briefings, research presentations and networking.

The Business of Research

Last year SPARC organised a series of workshops on the theme of making the case for ageing research. These had a strong orientation towards the private sector and business. This year the business focus has been towards the issues faced by those who operate in the public sector through workshops concerned with *Transport, Local Authorities, and Occupational Therapy*. Once more we report that SPARC is providing important input to an area which is totally neglected by other ageing research initiatives, despite the demand from the professions for better interaction with researchers who can strengthen the evidence base used by practitioners.



HRH The Princess Royal Meets Workshop Participants

Next steps

The aims of the workshop programme in the first year were to establish the credibility of SPARC with both a range of stakeholders and the international scientific community. The growing support for SPARC workshops provided strong evidence that this aim has been achieved. In the second year, as SPARC developed, so its workshops needed to accommodate a new set of requirements. Whilst continuing to mount workshops with a broad general appeal, the programme has also become more focused on the needs of the scientific community associated with SPARC, not least the award holders, leading to more specialist workshops, but also counter balanced by some workshops specifically designed for older people. In the final year, the mix will change again towards ensuring that as SPARC projects are completed their award holders showcase their findings. Many workshops are already in the planning stage for mid and late 2007 and early 2008. Details of these will be published on the SPARC website www.sparc.ac.uk as they are made firm.

Advocacy

The promotion of the case that older people can benefit greatly from ageing research, a major objective of SPARC, has continued much along the lines of the previous year. However, as SPARC has become more established so the response from policy makers has been more positive, with occasional requests from, for example, policy makers and major charities for advice and contacts. Over the period a rapport has developed with the Cabinet Office concerning adaptations to the home and advice has been given about the issue of mounting a national competition centred on the good design of adaptations. In responding to this request for advice SPARC has been able to draw on its involvement with international networks of experts.

Advocacy takes many forms, including: presentations at conferences through to meetings with local older people's clubs; discussions with the press; Radio and TV interviews; one to one conversations with policy makers and influencers; and the publication of articles. Every opportunity has been taken to make the case for older people and for ageing research and to inform others about SPARC. For example, on the evening following the high-profile SPARC-facilitated IET conference, a SPARC presentation was made to an older people's group. A few days after HRH The Princess Royal attended the COT/SPARC workshop a SPARC presentation was made to a local branch of the British Polio Society. The breadth of audiences and their keen interest in the science of ageing provide a good reminder of the challenge which lies at the heart of the mission of SPARC.



Participants at the European Expert Workshop on Accessibility

Presentations

Public presentations about SPARC have been made at conferences, seminars and workshops organised by the Irish Gerontological Society (Dublin), The International Council for Building Research and Innovation (Verona), Ergonomics Society (Cambridge), British Gerontological Society (Newcastle and Reading) and to three local older people's and disabled people's groups and at international events such as the European Science Open Forum in Munich.

Special briefings on SPARC have been given to the directors and staff of, for example, AMRC, ACF, DWP, DCLG, NESTA and the Cabinet Office, as well as to 5 charities with interests in ageing and to a delegation from the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Detailed discussions have been held with those who are leading ageing research in Canada and Australia with a view to close collaboration with researchers in those countries. Members of the secretariat have attended conferences and workshops organised by ILC, Housing 21, BRE, RCA, APPGAOP, CROW, RSA, King's Fund, the Daiwa Foundation, NDA. The Directors have been closely involved with the Funders Forum on Ageing Research and Older People, participating in a major think-tank in the Hague hosted by Unilever and through occupying an observer role at meetings of the Forum.

The Directors have also been involved as members of panels concerned with the BBSRC/MRC enquiry into *Public attitudes to ageing research* and the commissioning of MRC-led *Lifelong Health and Wellbeing Research Centres* and of EPSRC *EQUAL* projects. SPARC input was also evident in an EPSRC week-long Ideas Factory on *Taking Care to the Patient* led by one of the Directors.

One-to-one advocacy has involved much correspondence, mostly with ministers, MPs and civil servants and especially on the topic of the older worker. Very positive discussions with government departments have ensued following interactions with Lord Hunt and considerable encouragement has been given by Lord Sutherland. Generally the reaction of government departments to approaches from SPARC have been more positive than in the first year, possibly reflecting a realisation that neither the needs of older people will disappear and nor will SPARC!

The Press

Last year there was little to present about the achievements of SPARC, it was too new, and there was a reluctance to spend time making promises about what SPARC intended to do. This year, however, there have been more opportunities to showcase the work supported through SPARC awards and to highlight the contribution being made by the community which SPARC is building.

Whilst the secretariat has not had as much time available as in the first year to issue press releases there has been some useful media coverage especially in research council newsletters and particularly of note in the *FT* and *der Speigal* following a SPARC workshop in Munich.

Brochures and Posters

In response to many requests for easy-to-read, accessible information about SPARC, an eight page brochure was produced outlining all of SPARC activities but in particular the SPARC projects. Although not of the highest print quality this has been very well received for both its content and design and has added credibility to SPARC's reputation as being concerned about communicating to all stakeholders in ageing research. Equally valuable has been the production of 60 posters describing the SPARC projects, which are proving to be a considerable resource for use at workshops and other events. These capture the excitement and challenges of ageing research in a manner which is seen to be very attractive. Both the individual teams and the secretariat have copies which are freely available for use by third parties.

Awards Scheme

The defining feature of SPARC is its awards scheme. This absorbs much of the time of the secretariat. The scheme was announced in November 2004 with the deadline for proposals to the first call being 1st May 2005. The second call was announced in October 2005 with a closing date of 1st March 2006. Interestingly, although offers were made by the secretariat, there were no requests for special briefings on Call 2. It was suggested that the briefings for Call 1 were so widespread and effective and the information on the website so complete, that the activities of SPARC and the application process were clear.

Plenty of Interest

In response to the second call, 100 applications were received of which 69 were selected by the Advisory Committee for further consideration (compared with 85 and 66 respectively for Call 1). Of these 28 were subsequently identified by the Committee as meeting the threshold suitable for funding support. Following negotiations with EPSRC and BBSRC for further funding, 21 projects were funded (compared with 20 and 13 respectively for Call 1).

More Funding

The initial funding for SPARC would have supported only 11 awards, but BBSRC offered further funding, bringing its contribution to SPARC to the same level as that of EPSRC, provided that the projects funded at Call 2 were of a quality at least as high as that achieved for Call 1. That level of quality was achieved. The successful projects are listed in Appendix 3.

Broadening the Scope of Ageing Research

A consequence of publishing the Advisory Committee's observations on Call 1 was to encourage proposals in areas which had not been well represented in that Call. Call 2 led to many more proposals relating to cognition, vision, activity, interface design and the older worker although other areas were also well represented. The result was a broadening of both the disciplines involved and the issues being considered by SPARC.

During the course of their SPARC awards, award holders and their team members are expected to participate in SPARC workshops, as well Award Holders' Workshops. They will also receive editorial assistance in the production and dissemination of their final reports; help with producing posters about their work; and have the opportunity to participate in international activities. All but a few have some form of mentoring arrangement or advisory group. As the projects develop so there will be more opportunities for the research teams to take the platform at workshops and other events. The secretariat eagerly seeks such opportunities for the SPARC teams to showcase their work and frequently acts as a go-between for other organisations.

Website



The SPARC website, developed by Daniel Guth, has become a key resource for members of SPARC and the secretariat. It is frequently visited, and for some time it has received typically over 1000 hits on a quiet day and approaching 4000 hits a day following a news item or workshop announcement. The website, which has received much positive comment, especially for its news items and for including the workshop presentations, has enabled the secretariat to handle research proposals and workshop registrations almost entirely through the website and email. The website will continue to evolve with a major revision being uploaded in Spring 2007.

Funding Opportunities

Following the SPARC workshop on *Proposal Writing*, an information page on *Sources of Funding* has been provided on the SPARC website. This provides descriptions of many well-known and some less well-known organisations which fund ageing-related research, and gives links to their web sites. It also includes information about forthcoming calls for proposals. Presently it covers just UK organisations and whilst ideally it should include overseas organisations the secretariat do not have the resources to be able to undertake this task.

A more significant activity has been promoting specific opportunities for research support, from research council schemes to those available from, for example, small charities. A major effort has been invested in generating interest in the various calls from NDA, with which generally speaking the design, engineering and biology research communities had become disenamoured as a result of its initial unconvincing performance as multidisciplinary programme. SPARC was successful in stimulating a large number of applications to NDA, a high proportion of which have progressed from the outline stage either to full proposal development stage or to preparatory networks which are now funded. However these have drawn almost entirely on the design and engineering disciplines. The involvement of biologists remains very weak.

The Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee has met on five occasions since the commencement of SPARC, twice during the year under report, on 28th March 2006 and 22nd & 23rd June 2006. On the first meeting this year it considered which of the applications received in response to the Call 2 were within the scope of the call, and selected those for further consideration by peer review, as well as receiving progress reports on workshops and other activities. At the second meeting, as well as general SPARC business, it considered the referees' reports on the Call 2 proposals and recommended proposals for awards. On this occasion it was joined by Professor Bruce Allen, who assisted with assessment of the proposals. Most Advisory Committee members were heavily involved with the Award Holders' Workshops held in March 2006 and December 2007 and all continue to provide considerable behind the scenes support to SPARC.



The Directors look for some new SPARCs for the final year

Forthcoming workshops

- **Ageing and the Undergraduate Curriculum**, Host: Keele University, Jointly with BCA, 24th May 2007
- **Meeting of UK and Canadian Researchers**, Host: FICCDAT, Toronto, 17th June 2007
- **A Walk a Day keeps a Fall at Bay**, Host: Camden Council, London, 26th June 2007
- **Research for a Better Age**, Penzance, 10th August 2007
- **Research for a Better Age**, Hexham, 31st August 2007
- **A SPARC Workshop at the Annual BSG Conference**, Host BSG, Sheffield 6th - 8th September 2007
- **Older People on the Move**, Host: Reading University, Jointly with RiA, 9th September 2007

Appendix 1. The Secretariat and the Advisory Committee

Network Directors:

Professor Peter Lansley, *University of Reading*
Dr Richard Faragher, *University of Brighton*

Non-Academic Members

Mrs Elizabeth Mills OBE, *Eminence Grise Consulting - Chair of the Committee*
Dr Lorna Layward, *Research into Ageing/Help the Aged - Deputy Chair of the Committee*
Dr Elizabeth White, *British Association of Occupational Therapists/College of Occupational Therapists*
Professor Janet Askham, *Special Adviser to the Department of Health on Older People's Use of Services; Director of Research, Picker Institute Europe*

Research Council Representatives

Dr Colin Miles, *Head of Biomolecular Sciences, Biochemistry and Cell Biology Committee, BBSRC (until May 2006)*
Dr Lesley Heppell, *Head, Animal Sciences Branch, Science and Technology Group, BBSRC (from June 2006)*
Dr Kedar Pandya, *Associate Programme Manager, Engineering Programme, EPSRC (until July 2006)*
Dr Andrew Clark, *Associate Programme Manager, Medical Engineering and Ageing Research, EPSRC (from August 2006)*

Network Coordinators:

Verity Smith, *University of Reading*
Kirsty Springall, *University of Brighton (until October 2006), Dr Alison Willows (from March 2007)*

Academic Members

Dr Deborah Dunn-Walters, *Department of Immunobiology, GKT Medical School, KCL*
Dr Sian Henson, *Department of Immunology and Molecular Pathology, University College London*
Professor Bernie Conway, *Bioengineering Unit, University of Strathclyde*
Professor David Kipling, *Department of Pathology, School of Medicine, Cardiff University*
Dr Constantinos Maganaris, *Centre for Biophysical and Clinical Research into Human Movement, Manchester Metropolitan University*
Professor Kevin Morgan, *Department of Human Sciences, Loughborough University*
Professor Marcus Ormerod, *SURFACE Inclusive Design Research Centre, School of Construction and Property Management, Salford University*

Co-opted member for Awards Panel Meeting

Professor Bruce Allen, *Institute of Ophthalmology, UCL*

Appendix 2: SPARC Awards Call 1

Principal Investigator	Institution	Project Title	Months - Award	Award
Mr Philip Astley	South Bank	Integrating the technological and social models of later life in the maintenance and adaptation of private housing: a feasibility study of knowledge management information and visualisation systems	12	£30,500
Dr Mark Bagley	Cardiff	Chemical tool for ageing research	12	£35,959
Mr Mike Bradley	Middlesex	An investigation into the advanced technology desires, needs and requirements of older drivers	18	£55,500
Dr Richard Hartley	Glasgow	EPR, oxidative stress and ageing	18	£58,534
Dr Katrin Jennert-Burston	Brighton	A proteomics approach to understanding age-related changes in neuronal function	18	£53,920
Dr Matthew Lancaster	Leeds	Ageing, exercise and gender: complex interactions and outcomes for all muscles	12	£25,500
Dr Shaun Lawson	Lincoln	Multimodal augmented reality to support ageing in place	12	£28,994
Dr Gregory Marsden	Leeds	Transport and older people: integrating transport planning tools with users needs	9	£24,963
Dr Charles Musselwhite	Bournemouth	Prolonging safe driving behaviour through technology: attitudes of older drivers	14	£27,691
Prof Richard Neale	Glamorgan	Design and community regeneration: Investigating personal safety concerns in socio-economically deprived communities in South Wales	9	£28,640
Dr Elizabeth Ostler	Brighton	Chemical analysis of ageing tissue in <i>Drosophila melanogaster</i>	18	£58,820
Dr Fiona Wylie	Cardiff	Evaluating the role of p38 MAP kinase in the accelerated ageing of WS fibroblasts	12	£39,992
Dr Alaster Yoxall	Sheffield	The 'inclusive engineering' approach: enhanced data gathering for an optimum diameter for ease of opening	6	£17,048

Appendix 3: SPARC Awards Call 2

Principal Investigator	Institution	Project Title	Months - Award	
			Months	Award
Dr Sarah Aldred	Birmingham	Lipoprotein Oxidation in Ageing	12	£29,148
Dr Ilaria Bellantuono	Sheffield	Gene expression profiling to understand stem cell ageing	10	£28,288
Professor Peter Buckle	Surrey	Understanding the design of the workplace for the older worker	12	£36,357
Professor Paul Chamberlain	SHU	Design and the Home	12	£23,178
Dr Richard Ferguson	Strathclyde	Temperature and velocity interactions in neuromuscular function during locomotion in older people	12	£51,322
Dr Dianne Ford	Newcastle	The molecular basis of the beneficial effects of calorie restriction on ageing: DNA methylation influenced by Sitr1-mediated histone deacetylation	8	£44,682
Dr Tom Freeman	Cardiff	Age, eye movement and motion perception	12	£37,229
Professor Alistair Gibb	Loughborough	Ageing in construction workers	12	£33,073
Dr Mark Hollands	Birmingham	The contribution of visuomotor decline to falls in older adults during adaptive locomotion	12	£51,472
Miss Faustina Hwang	Reading	Improving computer interaction for older users: an investigation of dynamic on-screen targets	12	£42,703
Professor Zoe Kourtzi	Birmingham	In search of bio-markers for cognitive ageing in the human brain	12	£29,961
Dr Gladys Onambele-Pearson	MMU	Optimisation of skeletal muscle responses and quality of life to exercise in people over 60 years old: healthy diet vs dietary supplementation	12	£28,245
Dr Donald Palmer	RVC	Unnatural ageing of killer cells	12	£36,765
Dr Avril Thomson	Strathclyde	Designer relevant bio-mechanical data : Packages opening in an older adult population	12	£56,587
Dr Andrew Trafford	Manchester	An investigative approach to define a role for endothelial nitric oxide synthase in the vascular biology of ageing and consequences for cardiac function	12	£32,695
Professor Lorraine Tyler	Cambridge	Investigating the neural underpinnings of word-finding problems across the life span	12	£40,022
Dr Christos Vasilakis	Westminster	Developing capacity for evaluating proposed policies in the care for older patients through computer simulations	12	£38,838
Professor Paul Winyard	Exeter	Application of high-throughput assays of oxidative stress to studies of the role of common genetic variation in healthy human ageing	12	£56,851
Dr Maria Klara Wolters	Edinburgh	What makes synthetic speech difficult to understand for older people? The contribution of auditory ageing	6	£17,775
Dr Ian Michael Wormstone	UEA	Age-related signalling capacities of the human lens	12	£50,083
Dr Panayiotis Zaphiris	City	Mathematical Modelling of Age Related Differences in Web Browsing	12	£26,600



Poster Session: Award Holders Workshop – posters can be viewed at www.sparc.ac.uk and are available for use at relevant events.