



# Susan Deuchars

I am a Reader in Neuroscience at The University of Leeds. For 19 years of my career I've worked part-time mainly, but I increased my working hours in 2014 when I was asked to be Programme Leader for Neuroscience.

### WHAT IMPACT DO YOU FEEL HAVING CHILDREN HAS HAD ON YOUR RESEARCH?

When I was in the lab I found that you spent a long time discussing research. When you have kids and are working part-time you don't have time to do that and if you're doing an experiment then you really want results out of it, as that's a day away from the boys. I think having children focuses your output.

### WHICH PARTS OF YOUR JOB DO YOU ENJOY THE MOST?

I really enjoy interacting with students; they're incredibly enthusiastic. I especially enjoy practicals and tutorials where you can really get to know people

and discuss different ideas. However I also love research, especially when a plan really comes to fruition!

### WHO DO YOU ADMIRE IN ACADEMIA?

I really admire Thelma Lovick and Bridget Lumb; they've been big influences on me though I'm not sure I've ever told them! They're scientists who really care about systems physiology and who produce incredibly thoughtful, beautiful work. I remember Thelma visiting my lab in London to learn about a technique I was using. She found out one of her grants wasn't funded while she was with us and I remember her disappointment. I found that really inspiring because I realised the people you look up to still feel that frustration but keep going on.

### WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED AND OVERCOME IN YOUR CAREER?

Research funding is a tough environment and a big challenge for everyone. Wanting to work part-time meant learning to control my workload and say no to things as otherwise you end up killing yourself to fit everything in.

### WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR YOUNGER SELF?

Don't be afraid of rejection. You may have the best idea in the world but people won't always see it the same way as you. Be confident in your abilities - it's easy to hold off applying for jobs and promotion as you feel in the future you'll be in a better position but it's always worth applying because it's not the end of the world if it doesn't work out.

I think I have a love of life and attempt to put things into perspective. I'm not sure I'm very good at the latter; it's tough when grants don't get funded etc. I found it easier to cope with when it was just my salary dependant on its success; when the salary of others hinged on it too it was really tough!

### WHAT SURPRISING FACT WOULDN'T PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I used to Irish Dance and I love doing British Military fitness. I struggle to act my age and tend to do something embarrassing and look back with a red face!



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1988: BSc Physiology, University of Cardiff  
 1993: PhD Royal Free Hospital, London  
 1993: Married  
 1997: Returned to work after two months maternity leave following birth of first child  
 1998: 3 year British Heart Foundation (BHF) funding for research, working part-time acting as Post-Doc and principle investigator with funding for part-time technician  
 1999: Maternity for 2nd child; used University Maternity Grant to prevent maternity leave pay being paid out of research grant; BHF grant put on hold

2005: Successful in application for EPSRC Academic Fellowship part-time  
 2008: Reader in Neuroscience  
 2013: Board of Trustees for The Physiological Society. Proud to be Equality and Diversity Champion  
 2013: Programme Leader for Neuroscience

