

NEWS

As the academic year draws to a close, it's a good time to reflect on the year gone by and all that we've accomplished. Having completed my first academic year as the Head of Department of Global Health & Social Medicine, I am all the more impressed by our extraordinary community.

On the last day of June, nearly thirty of us gathered for a lunch that marked as both an end-of-year celebration and a farewell to Camara Jones, our extraordinary Leverhulme Visiting Professor for 2022-23. Camara's incisive brilliance and generosity of spirit will be missed, but we have been enriched by the experience and we are optimistic about the potential for the conversations to continue from this foundation.

Following on from an autumn term marked by 10th-anniversary celebrations, the spring term was a time of moving forward. Our postgraduate students in the newly consolidated degree in Global Health, Social Justice and Public Policy MSc are well on their way to completing the year. Our largest-ever first-year undergraduate cohort delved more deeply into their course of study, while second and third year undergraduates enjoyed anew the combinatorial benefits of curricular and extracurricular activities in ways that we'd all missed during the peak pandemic disruptions.

The students have been engaging in activities ranging from internships in local councils to studying abroad on different continents.

This summer, we are delighted to welcome new academic staff: Dr Gabrielle Samuel is already well-known to the department, having been a researcher here and contributing invaluable to our academic community. She started a new permanent post in June, as Lecturer in Environmental Justice and Health. And we also welcome Dr Tanisha Spratt, a medical sociologist whose research centres on the relationship between self-presentation, neoliberalism and health outcomes amongst marginalised groups. She will be joining us in August as Senior Lecturer in Racism and Health.

I hope that everyone has the chance for restorative time over the summer, whether that's some more focused research and writing or just rest. I look forward to reconvening in September ■



Professor Anne Pollock
Head of Department

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Image by Freepik

Anti-Racism Steering Group launches archive on decolonising global health

This staff-student-led initiative aims to decolonise curriculums and research methods in global health and social medicine.

We are building an [online archive](#) and invite you to contribute articles, books, essays, films, podcasts, interviews and more.

The collaboratively built archive will be publicly accessible. Each contributor will be recognised with a link to their profile.

[Submit your contribution online.](#)

For queries, contact the archive moderators:

[Paula Viveros Wachter](#), [Shagufta Bhangu](#) and [Nancy Tamimi](#) ■



The GHSM end-of-year celebration for staff



Kriti Kapila and Ann Kelly join the Institute for Advanced Study

Each year the Institute for Advanced Study selects new members. The theme for the 2023-24 selection was 'Platforms.'



Dr Kapila will be working on her project 'The Post-biometrics Indian State' – an examination of the new public digital infrastructure and the emergent algorithmic citizenship in India, enabled by the world's largest biometrics-based mandatory identification system, Aadhaar. The project studies the state's attempt to digitalise different aspects of socio-economic life. Attending to spaces of resistance and protest, it moves the study of the digital state beyond privacy and surveillance concerns.

Professor Kelly will be working on her project 'Platforms, Bridges, Dipsticks and Bricks: Global Health on the Make'. It comparatively develops three 'platform cases', drawn from extensive engagement with global health research and practice (Ebola vaccines, diagnostics for neglected diseases and mosquito control products) to explore how health inequities could be more concretely levelled through the situated processes of product design, manufacturing, regulation, and supply. The project is thus a platform: an interface to experiment with new modalities of user-led innovation and a concrete foundation from which to reimagine the relationship between technological innovation and social justice in an increasingly fragmented world ■

Professor Camara Jones concludes Leverhulme visit with public lecture

Titled, 'Confronting racism denial: Tools for naming racism and moving action', Professor Jones' final lecture discussed a framework for anti-racism collaboration and led a spirited conversation.

The lecture, followed by dinner and music, was held at Lambeth Town Hall on 8 June and brought together the local and academic communities. The audience heard opening remarks from Councillor Jaqui Dyer, Lambeth Council Deputy Leader (Inclusive Economy and Equalities) and Professor Stephani Hatch, Vice Dean for Culture, Diversity & Inclusion and Professor of Sociology and Epidemiology, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience, King's College London.

During her time at King's, Professor Jones has fostered and supported such initiatives as GHSM's Anti-racism Steering Group and cross-departmental workshops for PhD students and early career researchers. She's also held sessions with King's senior leadership team.

She leaves us energised and grateful for her contributions, captured in her four key messages: 'Racism exists', 'Racism is a system', 'Racism saps the strength of the whole society' and 'We can act to dismantle racism' ■



Third year students embark on paid consultancy at Lambeth Council

Over the past 18 months, there has been a lot of work behind-the-scenes by Dr Nele Jensen and Professor Laia Becares to establish a new collaboration with the Public Health Team at Lambeth Council. For six GHSM third-year undergraduate students, this partnership resulted in a paid evaluation of three of Lambeth's flagship public health programmes.

After a competitive application process, Hodo Ahmed, Lily Mahdavi, Leila Benmati, Lucy Budd, Mariama A Jallow, and Miriam Okotie Thomas attended an official launch event at the Lambeth Civic Centre, hosted by the Lambeth Council Public Health Team on 28 April. The students were welcomed by Ruth Hutt, Director of Public Health and Chris D'Souza, Lead Commissioner, and were presented with the Lambeth Health & Wellbeing strategic priorities and Better Healthcare Programme aims, as well as an introduction to the three programmes to be evaluated.

The students also had the opportunity to introduce themselves and their interests.

This was followed by a delicious lunch prepared by the Healthy Living Platform (HLP), a local community initiative to tackle food insecurity in the borough.

Since then, the students have worked in pairs to produce evaluations of three council programmes: Health and Wellbeing Bus, Project Smith Community Connector and Health and Wellbeing Hubs.

The Health and Wellbeing Bus programme was established in the summer of 2021 with an initial focus of providing COVID-19 vaccines seven days a week and COVID-19 test kits at varied locations with low uptake in the borough. After the initial phase, the programme widened its offer to include signposting to local services, mental health and financial advice in response to the cost-of-living crisis, as well as wider health delivery, such as blood pressure checks, general health advice and flu vaccines.

The Project Smith programme takes a local approach, working at street and neighbourhood level, to support the community and its people. This is done by building and improving their own capabilities and local connections, thereby improving their health and wellbeing – and that of others.

The Health and Wellbeing programme was established in the summer of 2020, also in response to COVID-19 but focuses on developing and delivering innovative community-led, neighbourhood-based models to address health inequalities.

The students have worked with the programmes' project teams to develop coherent evaluation plans that assess how well the initiatives perform against their objectives and how they might be further strengthened going forward. To complement existing data, this has involved conducting short surveys, interviews and focus group discussions with staff and community members. Additional support with data collection and analysis has been provided by two GHSM PhD students, Carmel Cardona and Marina Kousta.

The students are finalising their final evaluation reports to present to the Lambeth Public Health Team. This opportunity has allowed these undergraduate students to gain hands-on, paid consultancy experience in the public health/local authority sector. We hope to turn this collaboration into an annual opportunity ■





Annabel Sowemimo at the Bradford Literary Festival

Annabel was at the Bradford Literary Festival for her new book *Divided* (see page 10), speaking on the panels 'Who's Health is Getting Served?' (with writer and sociologist Dr Marieke Bigg and broadcaster Romona Aly) and 'Decolonising Healthcare and the Criminal Justice System' (with Dr Aviah Day, lecturer at Birkbeck and co-author of *Abolition Revolution*).

Dr Sowemimo is a part-time PhD student with GHSM, where she studies the experiences of Black women with fertility control methods in Britain. She is also a recipient of the Dr Harold Moody postgraduate research scholarship at King's. She is a doctor, academic and activist who has been working on addressing racial disparities in healthcare. She is co-director and founder of the charity Reproductive Justice Initiative and Sexual & Reproductive Health Registrar in the NHS ■

GHSM postdoctoral researchers establish writing group

GHSM postdoctoral researchers used the King's Time4Lunch initiative as an opportunity to continue their research fellows/PhD writing group.

The writing kicked off at 10am and was organised into four periods of 25 minutes, with discussion of ideas during the breaks.

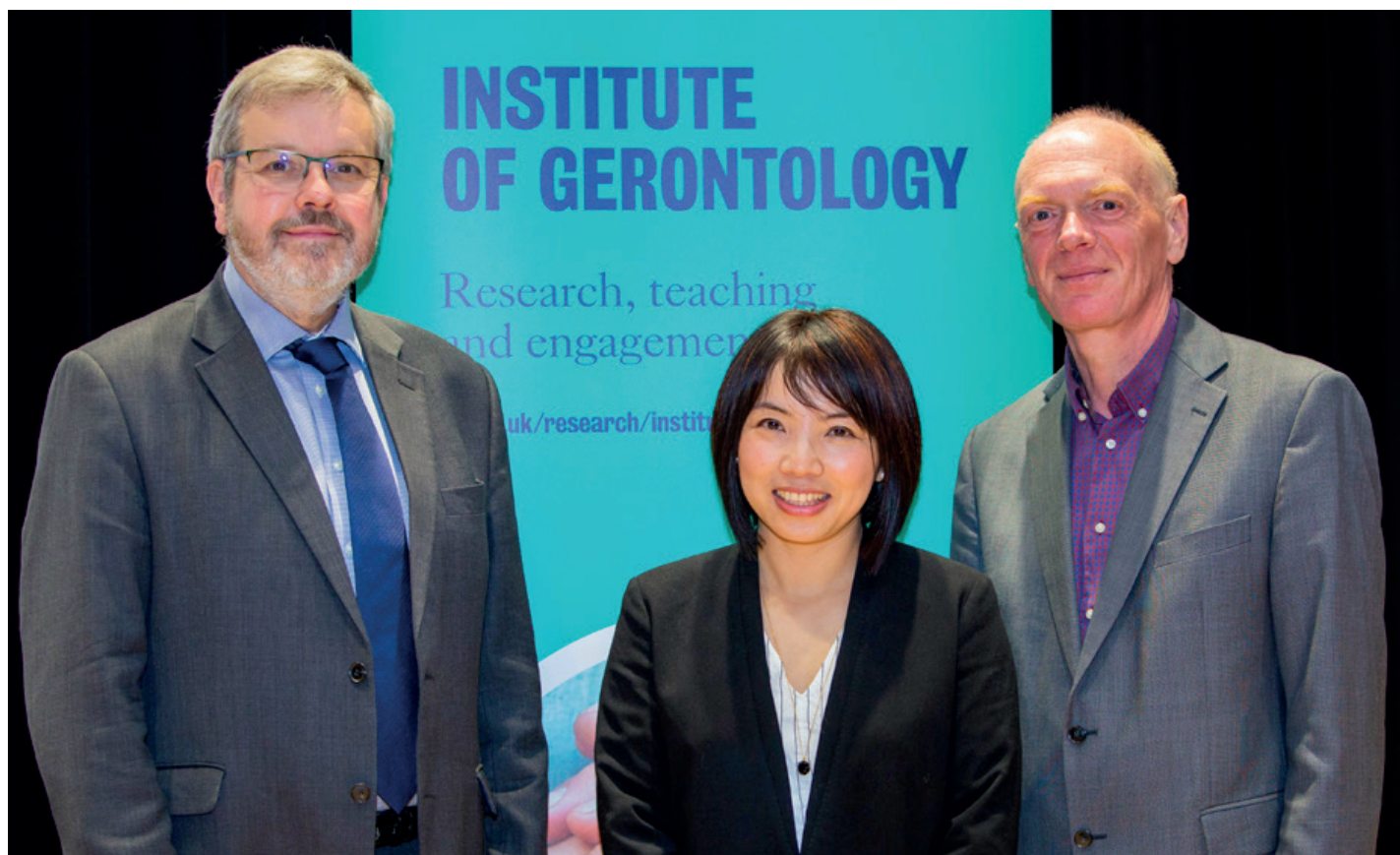
This included neglected PhD chapters, a workshop for laypeople and draft papers.

At lunchtime, they met in the Old Committee room to feast on sandwiches, salad sticks and dips – and even chocolate brownies. Beneath the portraits of former principals (and pencil drawings of their secretaries), they discussed each other's work, challenges and potential future opportunities.

The group is open to all at GHSM and is held on Thursday afternoons. Contact [Nick Surawy Stepney](#) to join ■



Left to right: Nick Surawy Stepney, Brenda Hayanga, Philip Jagessar, Jessica Rees, Daniella Watson (Henry Llewellyn joined online)



Left to right: George MacGinnis, Wei Yang and Thomas Scharf

Cross-departmental policy action necessary to tackle social exclusion in later life

Delivering the Institute of Gerontology's annual Hobman Lecture, Professor Thomas Scharf made the case for a coordinated policy response to address inequality and exclusion among older adults in the UK.

Institute Director, Wei Yang delivered an inspiring opening remark, setting the stage for a thought-provoking discourse. While Professor Scharf, a distinguished figure in social gerontology

and the co-director of Newcastle University's Centre for Ageing and Inequalities, delivered a captivating presentation on the multifaceted risks associated with social exclusion in later life.

Drawing on a wealth of research evidence, he shed light on the various factors that contribute to the diminished quality of life experienced by many older adults, such as low incomes, limited social connections, ageism, and discriminatory practices.

Chaired by George MacGinnis from UKRI, the lecture brought together a diverse audience of over 150 students, faculty members, professionals and community members, eager to gain insights into the critical issue of social exclusion in later life. The lecture also prompted robust discussions and raised awareness of the urgent need for a coordinated policy response to combat social exclusion among older adults. [Read more about the lecture](#) ■



Sally King awarded ESRC 12-month Postdoctoral Fellowship

Recent PhD graduate from GHSM, Sally King will be back at King's – but this time, with the Department of Women & Children's Health.

Sally's work is focussed on the influence of gender and racial myths in clinical research and practice regarding menstrual and menopausal health. She will use her fellowship to finish a book and journal articles based on her doctoral research ■

Undergraduates impress at Sutton Council



In July, five second-year GHSM students completed an exclusive one week summer placement with the Public Health Team at Sutton Council.

Aida Gebregergis, Ebada-Sagal Hassan, Nada Asaad, Mia Campbell and Tallulah Reilly-Stitt secured the placement following a competitive application process and participated in informative sessions, networking opportunities and data collection using Fingertips – the key public health data collation tool used by local authorities. They also had the opportunity to do hands-on public health planning on the barriers to healthy lifestyles. This included conducting an audit and interviews with staff members to assess the current state of diet and physical activity within Sutton Council, and presenting their findings on how the Council can promote healthy eating and physical activity in the workplace.

Impressed by the experience, the Public Health Team are keen to turn the summer placement into an annual opportunity.

'The students have been wonderful ambassadors for King's and the GHSM course. They are intelligent, professional young people who made the most of this opportunity and inspired us with their ideas in their end of week presentation.'

Clare Ridsdill-Smith, Head of Public Health Integration, Public Health and Wellbeing Directorate, London Borough of Sutton.

The scheme is the outcome of a new collaboration between GHSM and the Sutton Public Health Team – co-organised by third year student, Mukhlis Abubacker, who previously completed a placement with Sutton Council in 2022 (read more on page 9). It aims to give students first-hand insight into public health work at local authority level and apply in practice some of the knowledge and skills they have already gained as part of their degree ■



'The Public Health team welcomed us with open arms. The week started with introductions to the Council, Sutton and how their Public Health Team fits broadly into the health system within the UK. This was insightful and set us up for the week well. We were then faced with Fingertips, which everyone thoroughly enjoyed, as we had to find the Sutton data using the website. Further into the week we collected our own data and used what we had learnt earlier alongside the data collected to create our own proposals. We closed the week with a presentation and some goodbyes. All in all, it was a wonderful experience, and the staff were extremely welcoming – making it easy to ask any questions we had for them. Thank you to everyone that was involved in setting up the week and to the Sutton team.'

Tallulah Reilly-Stitt, second year student



'My experience with the Public Health Team was truly informative and exciting. We covered so much content and had tons of opportunities to develop a variety of skills. The week built up from giving us general information about Sutton (population, health statistics) to researching secondary data using software like Fingertips, and then being able to collect primary data via surveys and semi-structured interviews. Everything built up to the final task at the end of the week, which was developing a presentation with all our findings to give proposals for facilities and initiatives for the new council building that would promote physical activity levels within the council staff. The week challenged you and definitely helped build confidence. It also gave me an idea of what working in a local council is like. The team was really friendly and answered any questions we had about their experience/journey. I really enjoyed my experience and would definitely recommend it!'

Aida Gebregergis, second year student

'I had the opportunity to immerse myself in the world of public health work at the local authority. Throughout my time there, I gained invaluable hands-on insights into public health data analysis and programme planning. The highlight of this experience was presenting a comprehensive presentation to the Public Health Team, which included the esteemed director of the council. This presentation aimed to introduce strategies and ideas to implement in the healthcare field. It was a thrilling experience to share my knowledge and recommendations, with the aim of improving public health outcomes within the council's jurisdiction. I worked with large-scale public health data collection and analysis. I utilised various tools and programmes such as Fingertips to view and analyse different diseases and their rates across different areas of England. This allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the patterns, trends and challenges associated with different health conditions in specific regions.'

Nada Asaad, second year student



My public health summer internship with Sutton Council

By Mukhlis Abubacker



Now in my third year of the Global Health & Social Medicine BSc (Neuroscience pathway), I have been struck by the constantly shifting terrain of global health and social medicine. This can be difficult to traverse, especially without a proper understanding of the origins and underpinnings that cause these shifts – whether they be economic, historical, social or even cultural.

Learning about the elements that constitute global health outcomes made me wonder whether the theoretical knowledge that I had gained would be effective in a practical setting. So in 2022, I found it incumbent upon myself to gain some practical experience in the field. Although I understood the critical importance of the theoretical aspects and frameworks of global health and social medicine, I wanted to bring them to life in a practical setting.

I applied to multiple public health internships with different firms and health companies and finally managed to get a summer internship with my local public health department in Sutton Council.

The internship lasted two months and during this time, I worked in different sub-departments. I quickly learnt that it takes professionals from a variety of academic backgrounds and sectors to keep the public health department running.

I worked with epidemiologists who collected and analysed health data. At the time, the immediate focus was on COVID-19 and monkeypox, but there was also an investigation of obesity and

smoking as long-term issues. The raw data then made its way to the public health experts in the council to decide whether it would be necessary to create interventions – protection against these diseases, if they were deemed dangerous or spreading. Once the interventions were approved, they would be carried out on the ground by social workers, and the media team would aid in publicising the interventions effectively.

Observing the interconnectivity of these different professions working under one umbrella made me appreciate every specialty and how each sub-department contributed uniquely but collaboratively to creating better health outcomes.

The role assigned to me was to create content for the JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment) document, which aims to update the birth rate statistics in the borough. I also decided to go slightly beyond and pitch my own intervention, posing the idea of reducing fat and cholesterol rates in the borough by introducing industrial air fryers rather than consuming deep-fried foods. My aim was to reduce levels of

obesity, cholesterol and unhealthy foods in the local area.

Overall, I learnt a huge amount during my time working for the local public health department, from analysing data to creating policy interventions. I was very much inspired by the team at Sutton. This gave me the idea of proposing a five-day intensive summer programme for other GHSM undergraduate students – to provide them with the chance to experience working in a public health department. I successfully managed to connect Sutton's public health department with King's students with the help of Dr Nele Jensen, and the summer programme ran successfully for the first time in June 2023 ■



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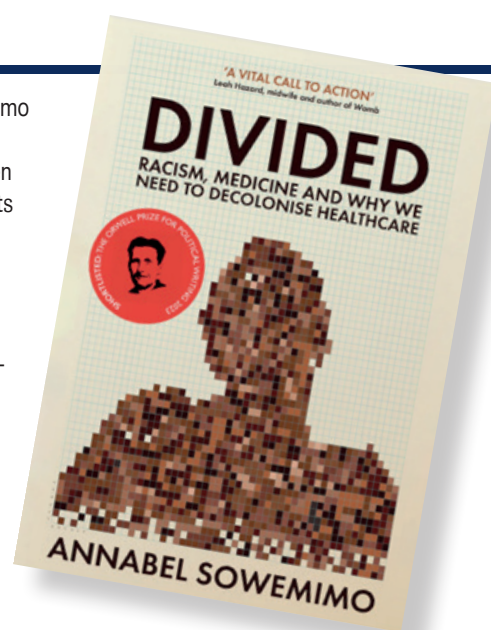
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Divided: Racism, medicine and why we need to decolonise healthcare

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are all too aware of the urgent health inequalities that plague our world. But these inequalities have always been urgent: modern medicine has a colonial and racist history.

In her book, 'Divided', Dr Annabel Sowemimo unravels the colonial roots of modern medicine. Tackling systemic racism, hidden histories and healthcare myths, she recounts her own experiences as a doctor, patient and activist.

The Orwell shortlisted book exposes the racial biases of medicine that affect our everyday lives and provides an illuminating – and incredibly necessary – insight into how our world works, and who it works for. It has also been listed as one of the Financial Times' best summer books for 2023 ■



Older persons in vulnerable situations: A policy brief



Recent Gerontology PhD, Dr Emma Maun has been working as a consultant with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). From her time with the UN, she has drafted a policy brief titled 'Older Persons in Vulnerable Situations.'

The brief notes that many older persons are not vulnerable but can be at greater risk of exposure to vulnerable situations. They also have different challenges and may have fewer coping strategies than younger groups.

Her brief highlights the importance of lifelong policies to address vulnerabilities that accumulate across the life course and generations, but also focuses on policies aimed at later life. These include the need to address adequate income and housing, health and long-term care, social participation and the importance of including older persons in decision making and data collection.

The conflict in the Ukraine is discussed as an example of a situation affecting many older persons, but where the greatest risks of difficulty or harm are among those who already face disadvantage and discrimination.

The consultancy, which ran from November 2022 to February 2023, included writing a conceptual discussion of the causes of vulnerable situations and vulnerability among older persons. It also included producing text boxes of policy approaches and strategies used in the region and presenting the conceptual

framework at an online launch event in May.

Dr Maun was fortunate to be able to draw on the expertise of Professor Karen Glaser and Professor Laia Becares from GHSM, and Dr Caroline Green from King's NIHR Health and Social Care Workforce Research Unit during the consultancy.

UNECE publishes policy briefs on topics relating to population ageing several times per year, which are aimed at the National Focal Points on Ageing and wider policymakers across the region (56 countries in Europe, Central and West Asia, and North America).

Since finishing the policy brief, Dr Maun has most recently worked with Professors Ben Geiger and Karen Glaser on their Work and Welfare programme.

The full policy brief, as well as presentations from the launch event, are available online ■

Dr Tanisha Spratt

Senior Lecturer in Racism and Health



What's your academic background?

I studied English and American literature as an undergraduate student before moving over to King's for an MA in North American Studies. I then completed a PhD in Sociology at the University of Cambridge, where my research focused on lived experiences of visible and invisible chronic health conditions in the USA. After my PhD, I started a postdoc in the Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences, University of Oxford, before moving over to the University of Greenwich to take up a lecturing position in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Whilst at Greenwich, I also completed a visiting research fellowship in the Center for Health and Wellbeing (CHW) at Princeton University.

What are you working on at the moment?

I have several ongoing, independent and collaborative projects. Two of my independent projects explore issues related to inter- and intra-racial health disparities and the use of health interventions to reduce them. The first project examines the relationship between everyday racism, racism-induced stress and poor health outcomes amongst Black British women by considering how colourism might influence those health outcomes, as well as the coping strategies that some women use to try to reduce those outcomes. The other project explores the use of 'Black joy' as a health intervention in tackling the negative effects that racism has on health.

One of the collaborative projects I'm working on is an edited book collection (forthcoming with Bristol University Press in 2025) on the use of stigma in medical sociology, along with two other colleagues and King's very own Oli Williams! Another is a grant application that considers the use of integrated care methods in health research, with a particular focus on the role of the arts and culture in improving physical and mental health outcomes for marginalised groups.

As well as these projects, I'm currently working on a book tentatively called 'Ungrievable Lives: Race, Risk and Responsibility in Neoliberal Societies' (forthcoming with Bloomsbury in 2025), which uses a case study approach to analyse who we grieve and why we grieve them, and how that's often linked to racialised logics of deservedness and perceptions of human value.

What are you most looking forward to in your new role?

There are so many things I'm excited about! I'm already really enjoying meeting new colleagues and learning about the interdisciplinary research taking place in GHSM. I'm looking forward to meeting and getting to know my students and tutees, and to building new collaborations with colleagues both within GHSM and the wider university.

When you're not working, what do you like to do with your time?

I love to cook, so when I'm at home I can usually be found pottering around my kitchen experimenting with recipes with a podcast on in the background (I'm a huge podcast listener so please pass on any recommendations!). I'm also actively trying to be a better plant mum to the many plants I have, so I spend quite a lot of time caring for them ■

Dr Gabrielle (Gabby) Samuel

Lecturer in Environmental Justice and Health



What's your academic background?

My background is in life sciences – I have a PhD in molecular genetics, but then conducted a Bioethics MSc (in Australia) after post-doc'ing for a few years and realising lab work wasn't for me. I then completed a PhD in medical sociology to really cement the transition to the social sciences. I found the move really hard (and still do), but I've definitely grown both professionally and personally. Because of my background, I'm a very applied academic and revel in inter-disciplinarity. My interests remain in genomics but have expanded to include health data/digital health more generally – most recently around notions of environmental justice.

What are you working on at the moment?

(Too) many things! I'm working on my Wellcome grant, which explores the environmental impacts of (digital) health research. On one side, I'm thinking about issues of responsibility ('response-ability') and how these tie into notions of environmental justice. I'm also thinking about how responsibility and governance is constructed in ethical frameworks through neo-liberal structures, which lead to inequities.

On the other side, I'm about to embark on exploring public perceptions of environmental sustainability and health. I'm establishing a national and international Centre for Sustainable Digitally-enabled Health, to bring together a network of people interested in the topic. I'm also developing a digital sustainability framework for use in virtual care with some people in Canada. And I'm continuing my work on the ethics of genomics and biobanking, with some of that focusing on the associated environmental issues (particularly of ultra-low temperature freezers).

What are you most looking forward to in your new role?

Everything! This is such an amazing opportunity. I've been in the department for six years and it is such a great space, with wonderful people and a really nice atmosphere and sense of collegiality. So, I'm probably most excited that I don't have to leave! I can finally spend more time with students and play a role in shaping both the educational side of the department, as well as promoting my research agenda around issues of the environment. I have so many exciting ideas I want to get off the ground. I've been on short-term contracts my whole academic life, so I'm over the moon!

When you're not working, what do you like to do with your time?

I mainly like to hang out with my kids. I have three children – two boys, 11 and 12, and one 16 year old girl. Although, they're getting older and don't necessarily want to hang out with me! I love to be outdoors and love being in the water, so swimming in ponds, surfing, kayaking and bodyboarding. I adore travelling but try to now do this as sustainably as possible, so lots of train visits to the beaches of Devon, Wales and Scotland. I also run, bike and do yoga (I used to be a personal trainer so I'm into exercise) ■



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