

REPORT Women in Vision UK holds inaugural meeting

15 December 2017 • Hallam Conference Centre, London, UK • Helen Khan, h.khan@ucl.ac.uk

Friday 15 December saw the first ever Women in Vision UK (WVUK) meeting, kick starting a network of professionals in vision and eye health.

Historically, ophthalmology and vision research have been male-dominated and women working in eye research and eye health have been known to feel isolated. The WVUK network aims to change this by offering support across all levels including rising stars and women already established in the specialty. The consensus of the meeting was that anyone working with or involving an eye or eyes is welcome to be part of the network. There should be no barriers to anyone, and that includes men, to ensure equality across the field.

Supported by the NIHR Moorfields Biomedical Research Centre, UCL Institute of Ophthalmology Equality Challenge and Fight for Sight, this is the first ever UK-wide group to support collaborative working, increase the profile of women in the field and



disseminate information and support tools.

Maryse Bailly, Reader in Cell Biology, who led the meeting with Professor Julie Daniels and Dr Mariya Moosajee, says "We are completely overwhelmed by the support we have received for WVUK. When the idea was first formed, we had no idea it would grow to such proportions. Our first meeting was a great success and has shown the need for our initiative. We are proud to have some great people behind us and we are really excited for what the future holds."

The meeting included a video message from Dame Sally Davies highlighting the importance of women working together to improve outcomes. The majority of the

talks were by prominent women who have overcome challenges and barriers in their careers in ophthalmology, science and medicine. The enlightening sessions aimed to demonstrate how women can be and have been successful at carving out careers through adversity. Also throughout the day were networking opportunities for all attendees,

which enabled idea sharing, discussion of ways of working and insight into best practices.

The meeting also included an open forum to gain feedback from delegates on their needs and wants from WVUK in the future. The speaker panel answered questions and commented on ideas to maximise the potential of the network. It became clear that there is a need for support for women and their careers in vision and ophthalmology across many different areas and disciplines.

It is exciting times for WVUK. It's just the beginning of a support network that hopes to change the face of women in vision.