



Dr Carol Davenport is one of 30 scientists and researchers selected by the Royal Society to be paired with politicians in the interests of ensuring policy makers can make informed decisions based on the best scientific evidence.

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## Northumbria academic selected for prestigious Royal Society scheme

A Northumbria University scientist, who leads outreach work dedicated to improving diversity in STEM careers, is one of 30 researchers selected to participate in this year's Royal Society Pairing Scheme.

[Dr Carol Davenport](#) is Director of [NUSTEM](#) at Northumbria and works with schools and families to engage young children in the possibilities of career paths in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM).

As part of the Royal Society scheme, Dr Davenport and her peers have each been paired with politicians and, from 17 to 21 March, will spend time understanding and exploring each other's working lives. Dr Davenport has been paired with Chi Onwurah, MP for Newcastle Central, who is also Shadow Minister for Science, Research and Innovation.

The [Royal Society Pairing Scheme](#) has been running since 2001 and helps to build long term relationships between scientists and politicians, ensuring that policy makers can make informed decisions based on the best scientific evidence. With a general election expected this year and research and innovation being highlighted as key priorities in the Chancellor's Spring Budget, the scheme's mission is more important than ever.

The week will begin with a parliamentary reception in the House of Commons, with speeches by Greg Clark MP, Chair of the Commons Science and Technology Committee, and Sir Adrian Smith, President of the Royal Society.

The scientists taking part this year are drawn from universities and research institutes across the UK and are paired with parliamentarians and civil servants from the Department for Education; Energy Security and Net Zero; and Business and Trade. Over five days, the scientists will get behind the scenes insights into how policy is formed, how research findings are used to inform policy making and how they can best share their expertise with policy makers.

Dr Davenport, who has a background in physics and teacher education, said: "Northumbria University's commitment to promoting STEM careers to younger children has been unwavering and our work with partner schools and organisations to inspire young minds continues to be a remarkable journey. To that end, I've been interested in exploring more ways to translate research into policy for some time, so this is a wonderful opportunity.

"Chi has a strong brief around science and technology so I'm looking forward to learning from her and working with her on finding ways to continue to support young people."

The pairing scheme will continue later in the year when the parliamentarians visit their scientist counterparts at their home institutions.

Speaking about the opportunity, Chi Onwurah said she was looking forward to welcoming Dr Davenport to Westminster. “The Royal Society Pairing Scheme is such an important tool for building and maintaining links between politicians and scientists, and raising awareness of how we can transform research into policy which makes a difference to people’s lives,” she explained.

“As an engineer myself, I’m particularly looking forward to meeting Dr Davenport and sharing ideas on how we can make the most of the fantastic work taking place at both universities in Newcastle.”

Sir Adrian Smith, President of the [Royal Society](#), said: “Scientific evidence is essential for any government to address many of the global challenges that affect both the UK and world at large, from climate change to the rapid acceleration of AI technologies.

“The pairing scheme was set up in 2001 to help build bridges between scientists and policy makers, providing them with the opportunity to develop long-term relationships to ensure that robust scientific evidence is used to shape public policy. We must continue to strengthen these collaborations to ensure research is translated into policy that improves the lives of all of those in the UK.”

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