

## **Dr Lisa Ayers**

Having started my career in cancer immunology research, I was keen to apply for a training programme as a clinical scientist in immunology to see how this research could be translated into a clinical setting and benefit patient outcomes. After completing my training I was fortunate to be awarded one of the first CSO NIHR research fellowships which allowed me to undertake a PhD part-time whilst continuing with my clinical career. My career as a clinical academic scientist with the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust was further enhanced by an HEE postdoctoral NIHR 3-year research fellowship. My aim has been to integrate an academic role with my clinical responsibilities and to continue my development in my chosen field as a clinical scientist.

I have been very fortunate to be surrounded by inspiring female role models throughout my career who have supported and encouraged my aspirations. I now wish to use this experience to encourage the next generation of healthcare scientists. As part of this I am working as a STEM ambassador, providing support to schools, local career fairs and the Big Science Event.

This fellowship is a great opportunity to learn more about public engagement within healthcare science through the 'People Like Me' resources from WISE. I hope to use this in my STEM activities to encourage more young women into the field of healthcare science who may not have previously seen themselves working in this type of role and to raise the profile of healthcare scientists to a larger audience.

I am excited about the opportunities this fellowship offers, including meeting the other WISE fellows, gaining mentorship from outside of my discipline, receiving tailor made training in communication and personal development and the chance to reflect upon my current role.

I had my first child last year and I have experienced many of the challenges faced by healthcare scientists when returning to work. I aim to use this experience throughout the fellowship to support other healthcare scientists with caring responsibilities, both female and male. I hope to encourage others to apply for similar opportunities and to demonstrate that it is possible to have a successful career as a healthcare scientist, as well as maintaining a good work/life balance.