

## Birmingham Lecturer to visit Westminster as part of scientist and MP pairing scheme

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A University of Birmingham Lecturer will visit Westminster this week as part of a scheme which aims to build links between MPs, civil servants and scientific researchers.

Dr Rebecca Bartlett, Lecturer in Biogeochemistry, was accepted to The Royal Society Pairing Scheme earlier this year and will spend this week at Westminster with Gisela Stuart, MP for Birmingham Edgbaston. Gisela will then visit Rebecca at the University of Birmingham early in the New Year. Gisela said: 'I'm keen to support schemes which bring together researchers and policy makers. If politicians don't understand the needs of universities and those who work in them, they won't be able to make good decisions. New technologies will provide the jobs we need.'

The scheme pairs scientists with either an MP or civil servant to give both parties first hand insight into each other's roles.

Rebecca said: 'Taking part in the scheme will give me the opportunity to further my understanding of policy decisions and how they influence research, whilst showing policy makers the impact their decisions have on research activity. It will also give me a chance to discover the best way of making my work available to decision makers.'

'I am keen to see democracy at work and to play a part in improving the connection between scientific research and policy.'

Rebecca will be writing an online diary page during her visit to Westminster. You will be able to follow her progress here:

[www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/week-westminster.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/week-westminster.aspx) (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/week-westminster.aspx>)

### Notes to Editors

#### Dr Rebecca Bartlett

Rebecca's research interests are environmental change, biogeochemical cycles, water quality and resources, focussing on the small-scale chemical and biological consequences of long-term (global) changes to the environment.

Recent research projects include:

- Assessing the effect of sterilisation on the radiocarbon signature of freshwater dissolved organic carbon
- Evolution of nitrogen buffering capacity of land water interfaces, Alaska
- Upland-wetland biogeochemical interactions in a tropical landscape context, Malaysia
- Influence of recovery from acidification on dissolved organic carbon dynamics in organic soils, UK

#### Royal Society Pairing Scheme

The scheme, which was established in 2001, works by pairing civil servants and MPs with scientists. Over 170 pairs of MPs, Civil servants and scientists have already taken part.

During the scheme the scientists take part in a 'Week in Westminster'. This is a programme of activities including seminars, lectures and workshops and there may also be an opportunity to attend select committee meetings and Prime Minister's Question Time. Following this there will be a reciprocal visit where the scientists may get to attend an MPs constituency meeting or a meeting in a civil servant's department. There will then be an opportunity for the MP/civil servant to visit the scientist's research facilities.

You can find out more about the Royal Society Pairing Scheme here: [http://royalsociety.org/General\\_WF.aspx?pageid=7277&terms=mp+pairing+scheme](http://royalsociety.org/General_WF.aspx?pageid=7277&terms=mp+pairing+scheme) ([http://royalsociety.org/General\\_WF.aspx?pageid=7277&terms=mp+pairing+scheme](http://royalsociety.org/General_WF.aspx?pageid=7277&terms=mp+pairing+scheme))

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The University is home to nearly 30,000 students. With more than 7,500 postgraduate students from across the world, Birmingham is one of the most popular universities for postgraduate study in the UK.

The University is the eighth largest employer in the Birmingham/Solihull sub-region and plays an integral role in the economic, social and cultural growth of local and regional communities; working closely with businesses and organisations, employing approximately 6,000 staff and providing 10,000 graduates annually.

The University contributes £662 million to the City of Birmingham and £779 million to the West Midlands region, with an annual income of more than £388.6 million.

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