

The Risks We Face if Researcher Developers Disappear

Sector-Level Risks: The Unravelling of a Collective Fabric

The UK research sector has spent nearly two decades weaving a shared, collaborative, evidence-based fabric of culture improvement.



Without Researcher Developers:

Loss of collective insight

The intelligence built through networks like Researchers14, Vitae communities, national working groups and sector wide consultations dissipates.

Result: Hard-won knowledge about what improves researcher environments is lost rather than built upon.

Reduced coherence across culture initiatives

Universities drift apart in their approaches to research culture, leadership, and EDI. Fragmentation accelerates; shared standards loosen.

Result: National alignment weakens, and sector-wide frameworks lose consistency and credibility.

Reversal of 17+ years of cultural progress

Gains made since the Roberts Agenda - community, structured development, researcher voice, equity, and recognition of researcher needs - risk gradual erosion.

Result: The sector shifts from proactive culture-building to reactive problem management.

What's the Result?

The national fabric remains but strain spreads across the weave. What once held firm together begins to fray, thread by thread.