

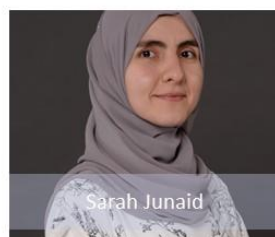
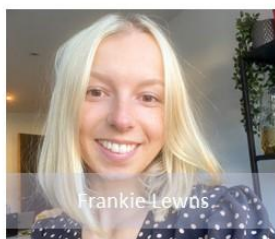
Innovation Women Conference

Wednesday, 8 March 2023, 9:00am-2:30pm



We discussed what drives women, challenges they come up against and ideas they bring to life.

We had a line-up of girls-next-door, who are passionate about science, business and various causes close to their hearts, and who have gone to do amazing things!



Event Summary:

In honour of international Women's Day, **Advanced Prototyping Facility** organised **Innovation Women Conference**, which focus was on inspiring more women and girls to enter the innovation and technology fields.

Speakers shared stories based on events in their life about what encouraged them to follow their dreams.

This event was also a learning and networking opportunity designed by women for women. Attendees had chance to learn from other successful like-minded women in business and science.

Agenda:

9:30 Opening:

- **Gosia Dzierdzikowska** - Aston University
- **Professor Stephen Garrett** - Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean, College of Engineering and Physical Sciences, Aston University
- **Debbie Assinder** - Enterprise Nation & **Naomi Nash** - Birmingham Tech

10:00 **Frankie Lewns** - Bloomwise

10:20 **Sharon Sinclair** - Circle Of Life Events

10:40 **Gail Watkis** - On Event Production Co

11:00 **Allie Joy** – The Syntropy Partnership

11:20 Comfort break (20min)

11:40 **Kate Allan (Walker)** - ExpHand Prosthetics

12:00 **Dr Sarah Junaid** - Aston University

12:20 **Dr Pam Waddell** - Innovation Alliance for the West Midlands

12:40 **Dr Mirjam Roeder** - Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion at Aston University

13:00 Closing & Networking lunch

Our hosts:

Debbie Assinder is the West Midlands Enterprise Champion for Enterprise Nation, enabling her to support and promote businesses across the region. Debbie also works with tech start-up businesses at Innovation Birmingham and is the Event Director for the Midlands Women in Tech Awards.

In May 2019, Debbie was awarded Young Enterprise Gold Award, 'For making an outstanding contribution to the work of young enterprise'. Debbie was also nominated for Woman of the Year 2020, in The City of Birmingham Business Awards, which "celebrates those business heroes who have made a difference to the Birmingham city region." Debbie is also currently shortlisted for the West Midlands Leadership Award for Diversity and Inclusion 2022. Debbie also received special recognition award during Women in Tech Awards 2022, for her services to the region in encouraging more women in tech.

Naomi Nash is a Head of Community & Collaboration @ Birmingham Tech. She spends her days finding and supporting all scaling tech businesses in the region through introductions, signposting, business support and peer networks. It's her job to know everyone in the tech ecosystem, so if you haven't spoken with her yet, make sure you do! Prior to working with scaleups, Naomi ran a startup incubator at Innovation Birmingham where she helped over 250 startups with early-stage investment and market readiness, and MVP building.

Gosia Dzierdzikowska works at Aston University as Project Officer and is involved in research and business development activities for Small-to-Medium Enterprises.

She is passionate about encouraging girls into STEM education and career and empowering women in their right to have access to opportunities and resources.

She loves bringing people together with events to celebrate a shared passion or to explore a particular theme or topic. Originator of annual Innovation Women Conference dedicated to International Women's Day.

Interested in holistic approach to business. Yoga lover, recently exploring Ayurveda.

Event gallery:

Gosia Dzierdzikowska, Professor Stephen Garrett, Debbie Assinder and Naomi Nash



Gosia Dzierdzikowska



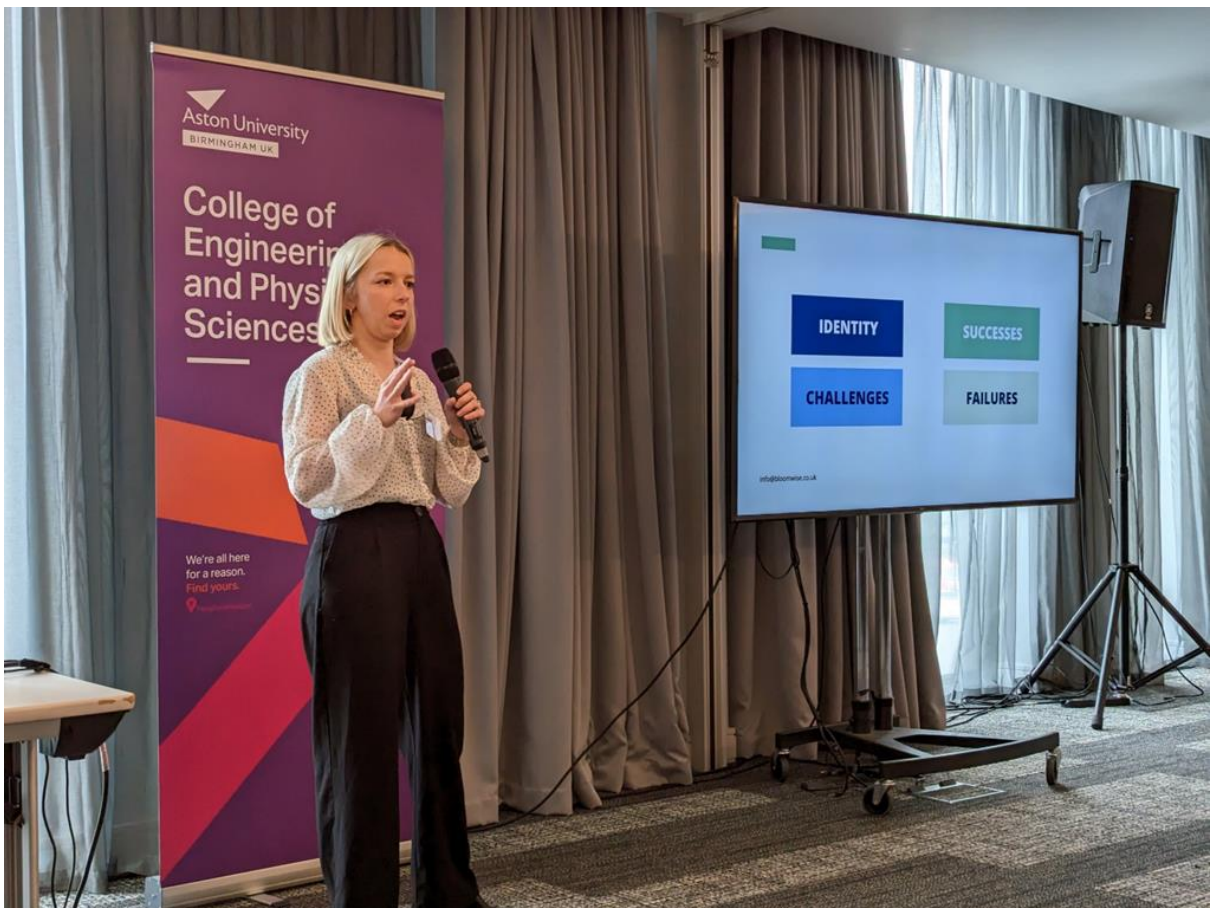
Naomi Nash



Debbie Asinder



Frankie Lewns



Sharon Sinclair



Gail Watkis



Allie Joy



Kate Allan (Walker)



Dr Sarah Junaid



Dr Pam Waddell





We are proudly building community of female innovators working together to create amazing products and services!



Feedback:

"With an array of industry experts as the guest speakers, It was an truly an event that could not be missed. An enlightening and thought intrusive experience, it has initiated a shift in my perspective. I applaud all the speakers for discussing their life stories and giving insights to the budding entrepreneurs."

Lucky Muse

"I felt really inspired and motivated after the event, both in my professional role and to bring about a wider change in my life toward following my purpose."

Anonymous

"Absolute privilege to hear from women who are changing the face of technology and challenging the status quo. Thank you for being "doers" and helping to bring positive change. Thank you Gosia Dzierdzikowska (She/Her) for arranging such an incredible day and for making it happen."

Debbie Assinder

"I felt energised about innovation and the potential support available to women."

Anonymous

"A very inspiring, enlightening, humbling and enjoyable event and an honour to present. I loved the diversity of stories and the diversity of ways they were told!"

Pam Waddell

"I felt it was well organised and much needed. I have more people I will tell about it for future years"

Anonymous

"Listening to all the other amazing women explain their journey's - highs and lows - and in their own way was amazing. I always leave these events feeling so inspired - so thank you!"

Frankie Lewns

"I was moved by the speaker's narratives and inspired to follow an authentic pathway. The diversity in the room was really important and I hope created a welcoming environment for all."

Anonymous

"This event was truly special, as we heard from eight female speakers on their lives, achievements, challenges and journeys (personal, academic and professional). It was truly powerful to hear how women from all backgrounds had (and continue to) overcome adversity to become who they are today, game-changing innovators."

Courteney Boden

"I thoroughly enjoyed it and how inspiring some of the speakers were!"

Melissa Danks

"I felt very empowered, inspired and grateful after the event"

Anonymous

What is next....

1. The **MIDLANDS WOMEN IN TECH AWARDS** are a unique opportunity to highlight and recognise the ongoing contribution of women in the tech sector.

The aim of the awards is to raise the visibility of women in this space and enable the next generation to "see it and therefore aspire to it". Currently just 17% of those working in technology in the UK are female and according to a recent study by PwC only 3% of young women have technology as their first career choice.

We hope that not only will this bolster opportunities for women, but it will also inspire other young women to get involved and realise that they too can enjoy a dynamic, exciting, and innovative career in technology.

[NOMINATE NOW!](#)

2. **Become a girl's mentor!**

Innovation Alliance for West Midlands and **The Girls' Network** are holding an information session for women interested in mentoring girls from the least advantaged backgrounds. They are particularly keen to get more mentors in STEM-related careers and/ or from the West Midlands, but anyone is welcome. Come along and learn more and decide whether mentoring is for you (no obligation!) or perhaps you can think of other ways to help the important work of this charity.

[REGISTER HERE:](#)

3. The **GBSLEP Growth Hub** is running a fully funded programme: Female Business Leaders Programme.

This female led Learning & Networking Group brings together diverse cohorts of business leaders to discuss business challenges and growth ambitions with peers.

A 6-week bespoke programme starting on the 27th of April for women who are running a business, and who want to learn how to manage business challenges and plan for business growth, with other like-minded business leaders.

CONTACT Charlotte Bowden for more information: charlotte.bowden@gbslepgrowthhub.co.uk

4. Watch **Inspiring Women in Technology** Mills & Reeve interviews

A series of virtual discussions with leaders, key players and "up and coming" specialists in the tech scene on how women can break into the industry, overcome challenges and forge a meaningful and successful career in tech.

[WATCH HERE:](#)

5. Interested in finding out the best way to work with **Aston University**?

CONTACT Business Referrals Officer Nadiyah Vasta: n.vasta@aston.ac.uk

Thank you very much for making this event so successful

**We really look forward to organising
Innovation Women next year**

APF team

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