

CASE STUDY

Dan Nussey



Dr Dan Nussey, BBSRC David Phillips Fellow, 2010-2016

I was awarded a BBSRC David Phillips fellowship in September 2010. When my son was born in 2013, I contacted BBSRC and discussed with them ways by which the fellowship could support me to work flexibly. As a result of this I switched to initially working 3 days a week and then subsequently 4 days a week. This flexibility allowed me to share child-care duties with my partner and spend more time with my family at the same time as developing my independent research interests and building a research group.

Prior to starting my fellowship I had spent 2 years as a post-doc in Cambridge and then held a 3 year NERC fellowship in Edinburgh. My research interests have always centred on understanding the ageing process in wild animals, and my BBSRC fellowship provided me with the finances to set up my own laboratories both in Edinburgh and out at one of my field sites on the remote St Kilda archipelago, to investigate a range of physiological markers of ageing in wild sheep.

The BBSRC fellowship provided remarkable career development support. I know many colleagues on fellowship schemes run by other funders, but have never come across any funder who gets as involved in the welfare and support of their fellows as BBSRC did for me. At the mid-point of my fellowship, I was invited to a review of my progress, which was tremendously constructive and supportive. At that review the panel discussed with me my uncertainty about whether I would be offered a permanent job in Edinburgh after my fellowship ended. They subsequently encouraged and supported me in addressing this issue as a priority. As a result within a few months I was told by Edinburgh that I would have a position after my fellowship ended, and shortly afterwards I was promoted to reader. Without the support from BBSRC I suspect I would have been waiting a considerable while for this to happen. The security this position provided gave me the confidence to kick on and apply for further funding for my research, and in the next 18 months I was awarded two BBSRC-funded responsive mode grants.

I feel tremendously grateful to BBSRC for the combination of professional support in terms of helping me to develop my research and further my career, and for the support that enabled me to work flexibly and find my own way to balance the demands of work and family life.