

Improving Diversity in Research Software Engineering



Marion Weinzierl

Marion Weinzierl is a Senior Research Software Engineer (RSE) with Advanced Research Computing (ARC) at Durham University, much of her work here has been refactoring and optimising code including Fortran, C++, Python, MATLAB and Bash.

Marion has experience of scientific software development in academia and industry, is an active member of the RSE community, and is N8 CIR's RSE Theme Leader.



Mariann Hardey

Mariann Hardey is an Associate Professor in the Department of Management and Marketing at Durham University's Business School and a member of ARC.

She studies and researches tech inequalities and professional roles in tech organisations and is the author of 'The Culture of Women in Tech, An Unsuitable Job for a Woman.'

Can you give us an overview of the project?

In November 2021 the N8 Centre of Excellence in Computationally Intensive Research was officially recognised as a chapter of the Women in HPC (WHPC) movement. It was a process started by N8 CIR's first RSE Theme Leader Kirsty Pringle.

Becoming a chapter of WHPC will help N8 CIR to focus on a range of issues affecting women and under-represented groups across the

N8 and wider high-performance computing (HPC) environment:

- Raise the profile of the issue of gender balance and inclusivity in N8 CIR, and with the academics we work with.
- Understand issues limiting the uptake of training places by women
- Examine issues regarding lack of women in senior roles across the HPC environment
- Raise the profile of people from other under-represented groups within the HPC environment

How will you address these issues?

Each of the issues will require a different approach. We've already started to gather information about workshop attendance to give us a baseline from which we can measure improvement.

We will also organise workshops for some of those under-represented groups, for example an all-female led HPC training workshop. This will help to create a safe shared space where attendees can practice and build new professional networks.

N8 CIR is also fortunate to have Marion Weinzierl and Emma Barnes (University of York), both of whom are recognised as trailblazers in the wider HPC community.

We have already some results from our working groups, one example being the preparation of a recruitment checklist.

Can you tell us a little bit more about the checklist?

We've worked to identify some of the key reasons that women and people from minority groups don't apply for roles, before outlining steps that address them and explain why these might work. Download it at: <https://n8cir.org.uk/news/diversity-checklist/>

How do you see the chapter it developing?

Of course there is a lot more work to do. Raising the profile of the WHPC chapter will be an important part of our work. This will require allies from a range of backgrounds. You can find out more about joining the group at: <https://n8cir.org.uk/contact/>