

Accelerator Career Plan

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Frame

Inclusive framework for research leadership



Aims of session

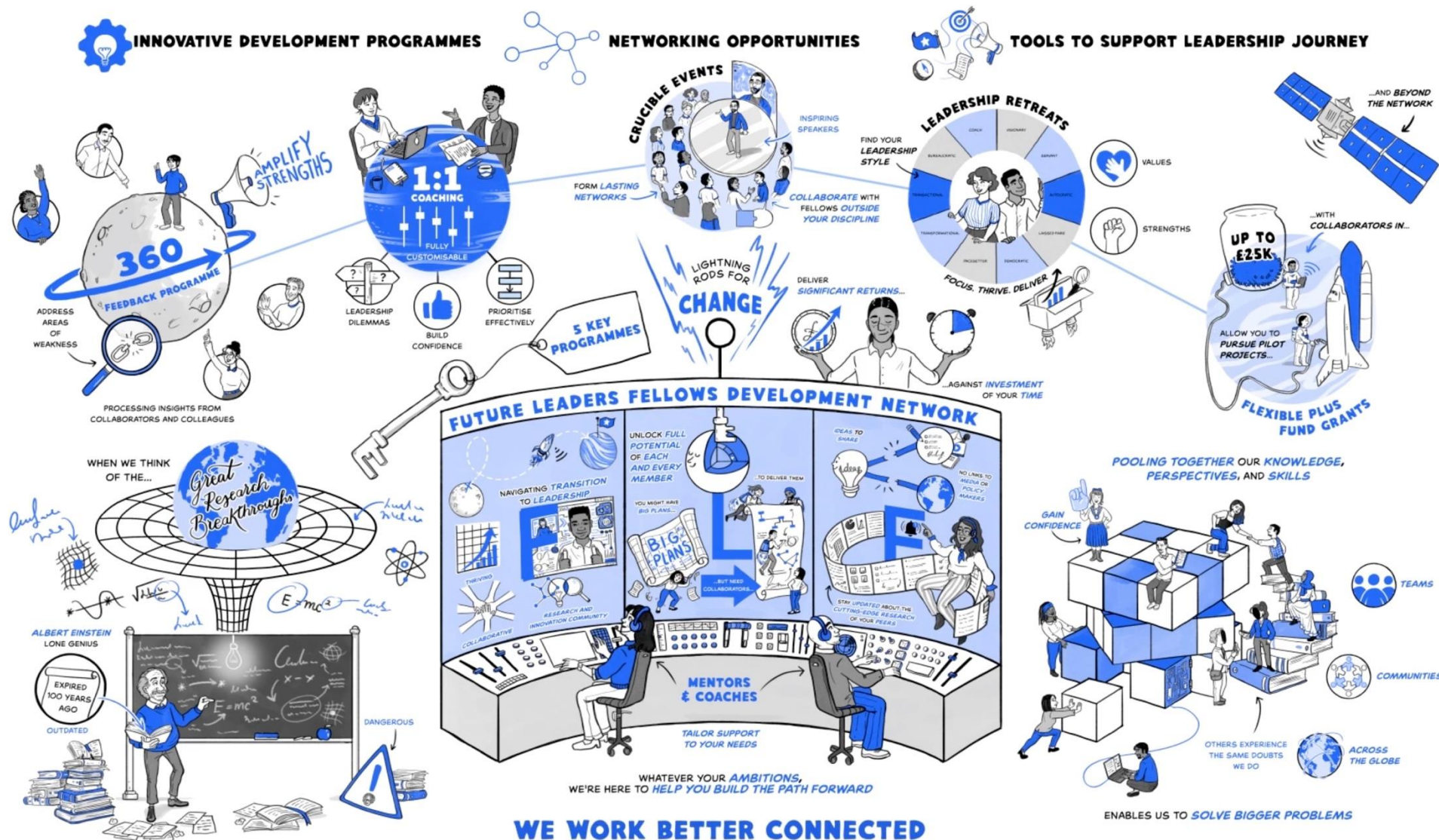
Walk through the ask from Wellcome

Think like a reviewer

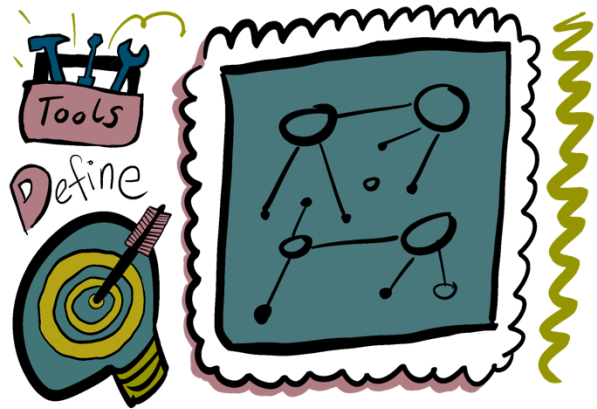
Answer all your questions

Some context

- My role at the University is to lead on two projects which have some relevance to this
- UKRI Future Leaders Fellows Development Network (so you can see what your development plan could include and you can emulate this in your plans) (YOU WON'T HAVE ACCESS TO IT)
- Wellcome InFrame Research Culture project which has funded a range of projects working on different issues – these might create things that you can weave into your research culture plans



Collegial Research Leadership Framework



Community Knowledge Hub



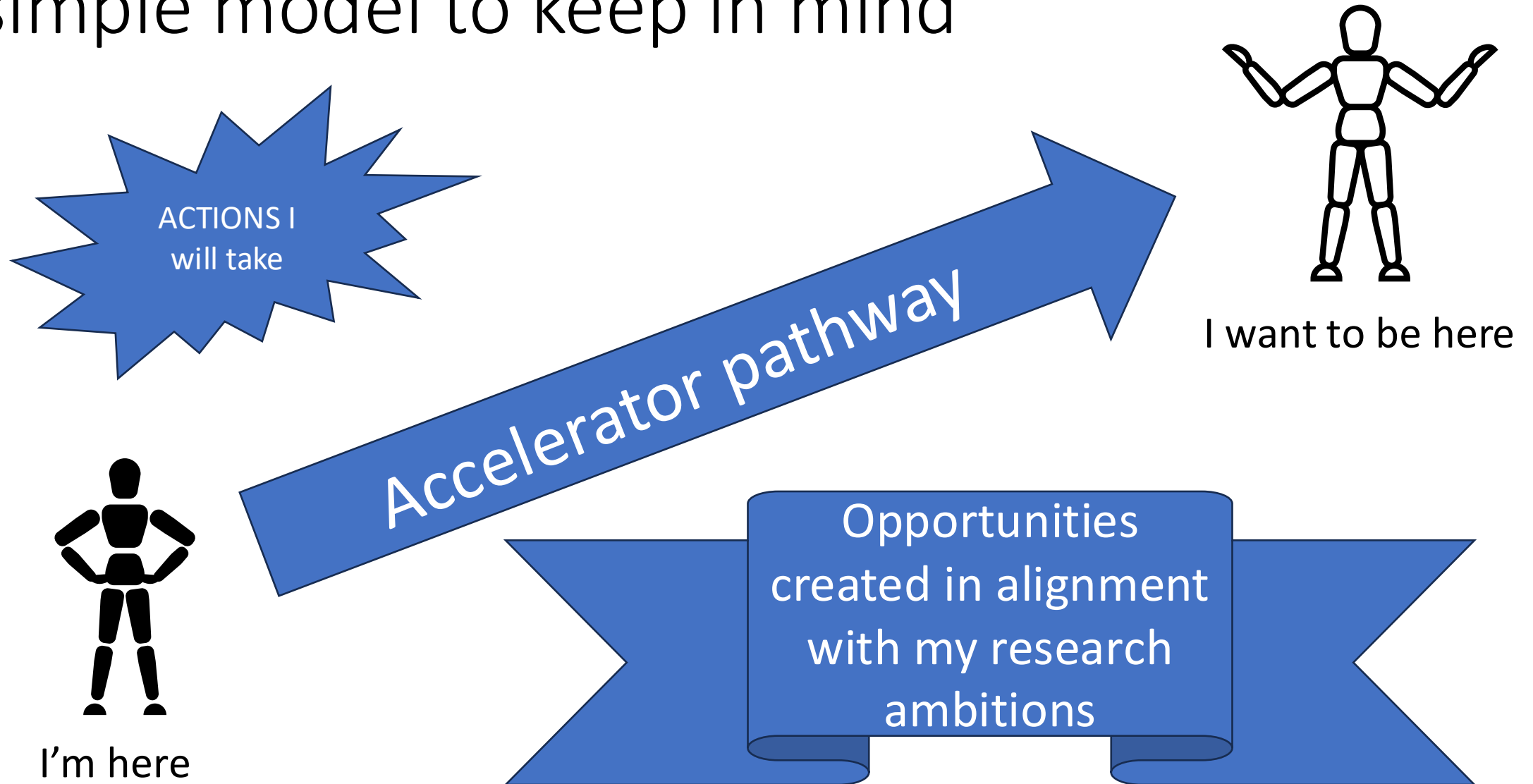
Culture Catalyst Fund

All images, Lisa Backwell

Wellcome Accelerator Awards: In a nutshell

- Annual until 2028 (plan for the right time)
- Designed to strengthen career progression (training, secondment, networking)
 - Where you want to develop research ideas (skills, proof-of-concept, pilots etc.) make it about you and your ideas/development
 - Wellcome love to see you move around (to the right place), so think about where you'd like to go
- They will pay salary (if needed), but don't assume it will always be covered (so check eligibility)
- No co-I or partners (this is about you), but mentors and coaching can be included (so do!)
- PhD not required, *IF* you've got 4 years' experience at a research organisation (including non-profit and non-academic health org)

A simple model to keep in mind



What's the Wellcome steer?

1 Your Career Plan

In your description make sure you include:

- *how you envision your career advancing by the end of the Accelerator Award, including specific goals you are aiming to achieve.*
- *how your future vision aligns with your longer-term career goals over the next five years, highlighting key milestones you aim to achieve and their significance to your overall career trajectory.*
- *how the proposed activities directly support your short-term (2-3 years) and long-term career goals. Be specific about the skills, experience, and training you aim to gain, including any offered by your institution if applicable, and their role in achieving your career goals.*
- *how you will contribute to promoting a positive and inclusive research culture throughout your award. This could include for example, plans for collaborative activities, mentoring, research integrity training or diversity and inclusion activities.*

A common mistake

- Specific research goals and generic career ones
- I'll get tenure
- I'll get a big grant
- I'll be an inclusive leader
- *how you envision your career advancing by the end of the Accelerator Award, including specific goals you are aiming to achieve.*

A solution

- Look at the span of the award and think about how YOU will need to be different, then identify actions and opportunities
- What will be on your CV at the end of the accelerator?
- EVIDENCE and specific outcomes

Learn by doing? Or focused development

- What will happen as a result of being a researcher?
- What needs specific development?
- IAD looks after research leadership
- ERO looks after development of grant ideas
- HR does NOT!

Align research and self

- *how your future vision aligns with your longer-term career goals over the next five years, highlighting key milestones you aim to achieve and their significance to your overall career trajectory.*
- Why will I give you tenure?
- Why will I trust you with a long-term grant?
- Why will I recognise you as a leader?



A career toolkit – available in our system

- Feedback – from people who know you
- Insights and “Pipework” knowledge – from people doing the things you are aspiring to
- Opportunities – that elevate people
- Advocacy – people who create opportunities and speak about your value

How this might look

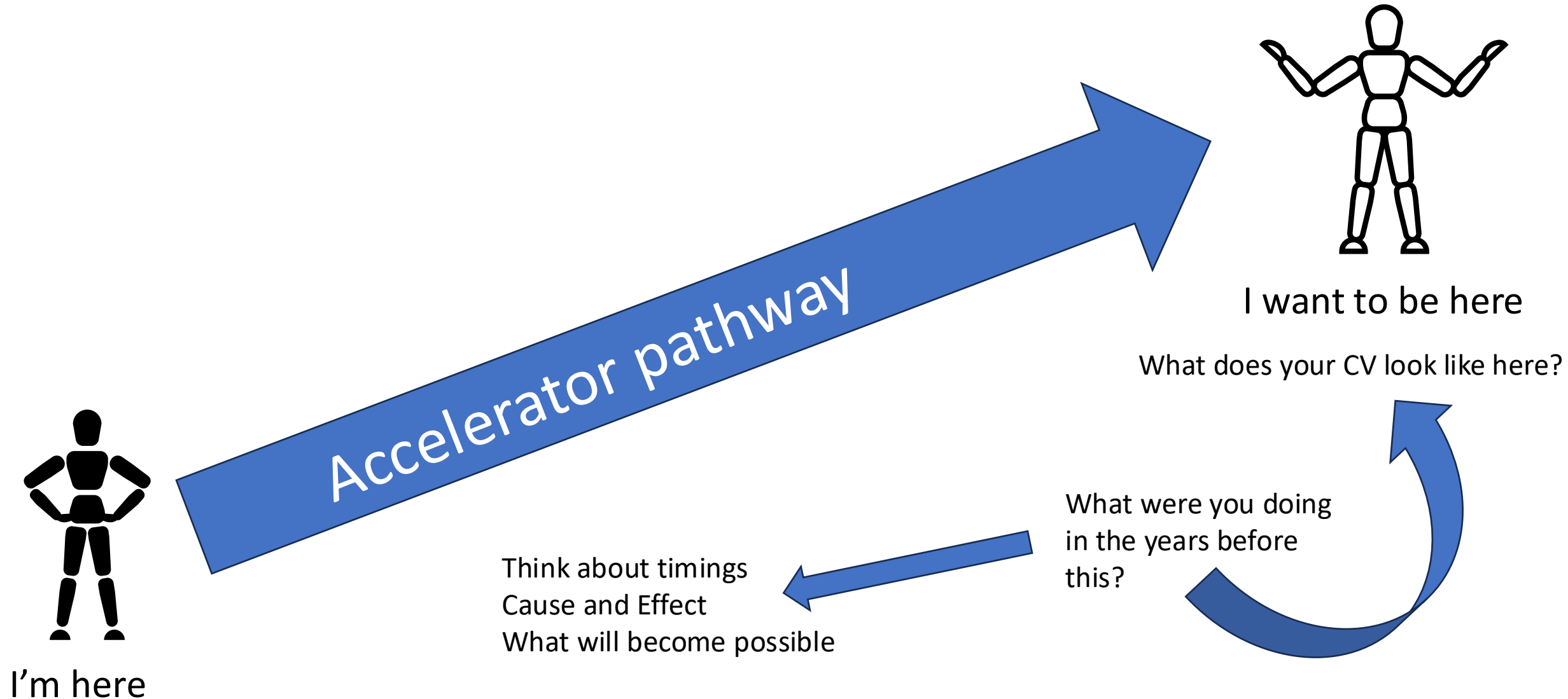
- Feedback – ask your allies for their views on the gaps
- Insights and “Pipework” knowledge – if you are going to do something new or complex, can you apprentice? Or use mentoring?
- Opportunities – you’ve got resources, what will you do with them?
- Advocacy – who will speak for you and what opportunities can they create or position you for?

Now more specifically – “after five years I’m writing a multi-partner IDR proposal”

- Use feedback – ask people who’ve done this about what’s missing in your experience and skills to manage complexity – look at an example grant and how it’s structured – think about how this demonstrates the gaps in your own knowledge and skills – ask “what do you wish you’d been doing 5 years before this?”
- Insights and “Pipework” knowledge –work backwards – big project, work package, small project, paper, visit, poster – what are the stepping stones?
- Opportunities you can create - shadow a complex project? Run a work package? Get experience as a reviewer?
- Advocacy – get others to agree to provide opportunities. Accelerator kudos will help open doors



- *how the proposed activities directly support your short-term (2-3 years) and long-term career goals. Be specific about the skills, experience, and training you aim to gain, including any offered by your institution if applicable, and their role in achieving your career goals.*
- DRAW A TIMELINE!



Worked example

- I lead a multi-partner, multi million-pound network
- I co-wrote a second multi-partner, multi million-pound project
- Why did people trust me? *Being a good partner people wanted to keep working with*
- Why did the funders trust me? *Track record of project success*
- What evidence could I point to? *Outcomes, income, positions of influence*
- How did I know what to write? *Experience as a reviewer, got lots of feedback*
- How did I find the right people? *Work with people on small, low stakes projects, be curious about what people do, ask for suggestions, seek people out and get to know them*

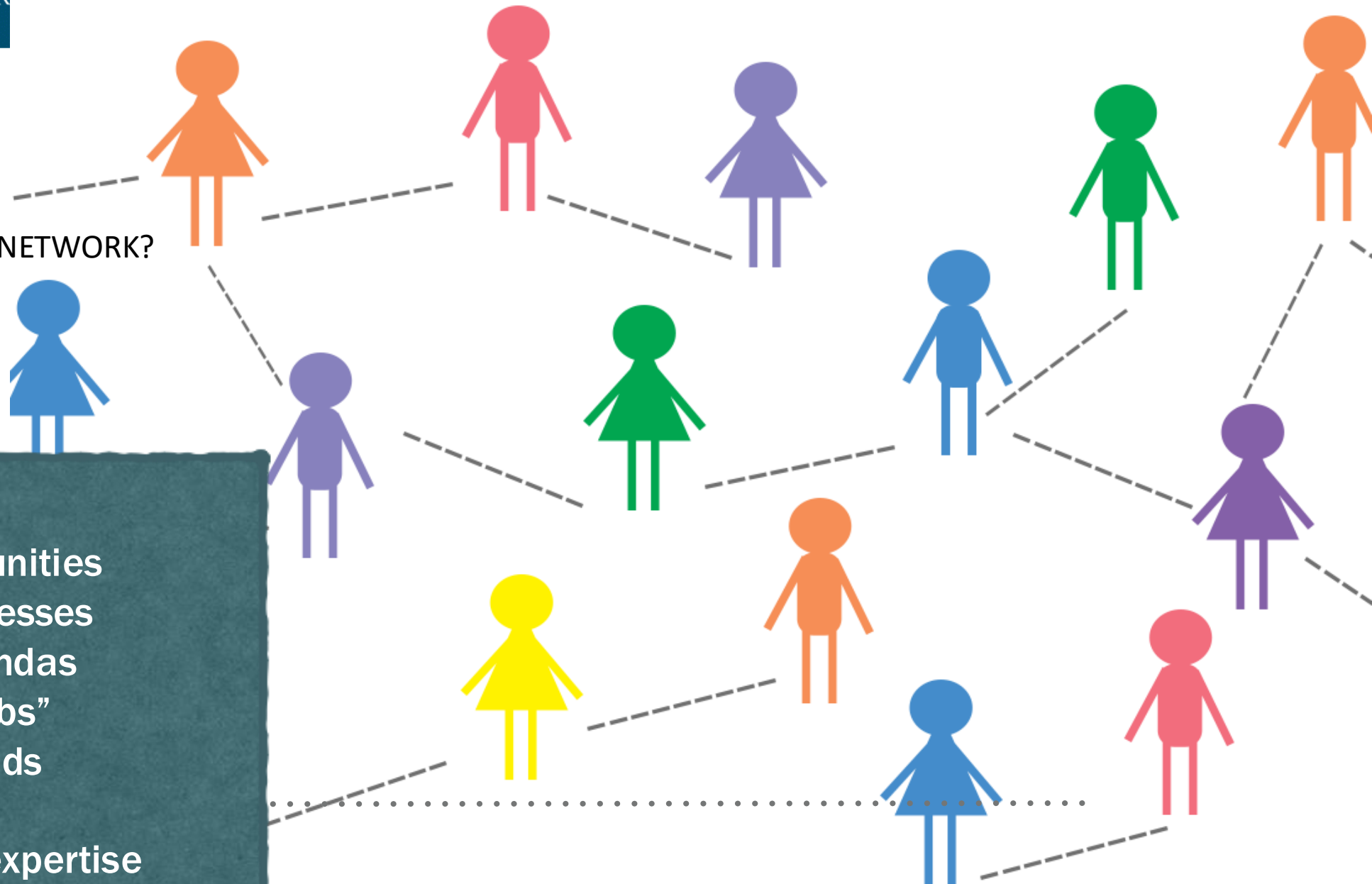
How can this award...

- Raise your profile with the right people
 - Put you in the room with them
 - Provide resources for you to develop evidence
 - Fill gaps in your trajectory
-
- You've got a free pass from Wellcome – be imaginative and bold

WHO DO YOU NEED IN YOUR NETWORK?

HOW WILL YOU GROW THIS?

Provide opportunities
Celebrate successes
Influence agendas
Network “hubs”
Critical friends
Mentors
Complementary expertise



Let's move from take to give

- *how you will contribute to promoting a positive and inclusive research culture throughout your award. This could include for example, plans for collaborative activities, mentoring, research integrity training or diversity and inclusion activities.*

What could you put INTO your field to support others?



Research Culture isn't
somebody else's job

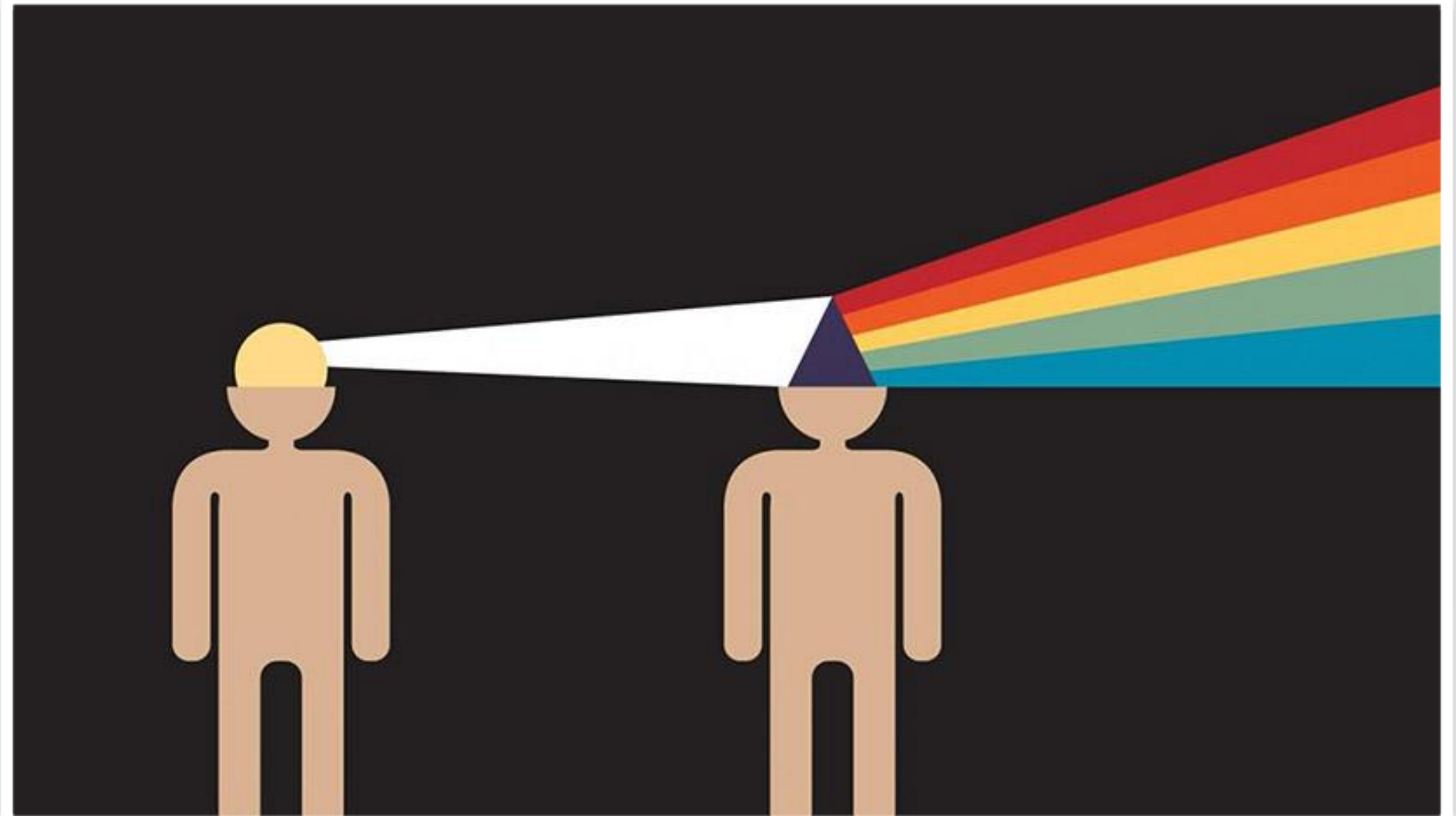
What can YOU DO,
strengthened by
Accelerator?



What you can put INTO your system

- Intent – Set yourself goals? Statements on your group page? Reach out to marginalized and minoritized groups
- Generosity – what can you give to others?
- Awareness – how will you be aware of the issues?
- Collaboration – could this be something to do collaboratively? With other Accelerator holders?

Always think about the ADDED value



Get them excited

- Create a sense of urgency
 - Why NOW – don't risk not funding me!
- Answer the WHY YOU question
 - How are you unique?
- Be bold in your vision
 - Backed by effective use of the opportunity
- Be generous in sharing the benefits
 - You've lived in our system – how can you make it better in new ways



Now please ask ANY
questions



I'll write this up...

- Blog post
- Anything else you want to see covered? Message me on Teams
- I'll try to review your career statements – make it EASY for me!
 - Put the assessment criteria/form notes in the doc
 - Tell me what you want me to look out for
 - Only send me what's relevant – I do not want to trawl through 50 pages
 - Don't send PDFs – hard to annotate

Accelerator Awards Round 2

More information,
details and examples:
Accelerator Awards
2025 | Webinar |
Wellcome

- https://youtu.be/MM9WqzuoTCc?si=5uI_sFLrpVPLZSCB