

Q&A with Philip Rowe

Philip Rowe is Professor of Rehabilitation Science at the University of Strathclyde. He won the 2013 LLHW Showcase Translating Research Presentation Prize for his work on [Envisage](#), a research project which aims to promote independence among rehabilitation patients through the use of novel visual technologies.



How has your research focus changed throughout your career?

My PhD looked at outcomes of hip replacement, for which I was awarded the European Society of Biomechanics (ESB) Clinical Biomechanics Award. At the time interdisciplinary research was not as developed as it is now, so I wasn't able to take my PhD work further in a clinical direction. Instead, I took a lecturing job to teach biomechanics and developed research in a health school. I worked at Queen Mary University in Edinburgh for 15 years to develop research in rehabilitation, and later got the chance to go to Strathclyde to increase capability and capacity

in health allied research.

What influence has LLHW funding had on your career trajectory?

LLHW allowed me to apply for something I had wanted to apply for since my PhD, twenty years prior. With the Envisage project, we've been able to engineer technology and test it in practice. This has put pressure on the engineering and design people to get it right, and means that the technology is well-applied and can have a greater patient impact. I would say this has been the real value of LLHW. Had this funding not come along, I probably would have reverted to being a straightforward engineering researcher.

Has your work become more interdisciplinary as a result of this funding?

My career focus was interdisciplinary from the start, but unfortunately the opportunities for this type of research were not available when I wanted them. Now that the Research Councils work together – and it's recognised that the medical and engineering boxes overlap – my area of research and my career trajectory have been accelerated.

My current research theme is producing engineering technologies for rehabilitation and looking at the outcomes of rehabilitation services. The importance of joining engineering and rehabilitation practice knowledge in this way has only recently been recognised.

What impact would you say the Envisage project has had?

The local hospital in Strathclyde has invested in a human biomechanical movement science lab, due in part to the success of Envisage. We are also in partnership with a company making visualisation software for the rehabilitation market. They need partners like us who understand the clinical side.