



Local Network Lead Guidebook



What is an LNL?

A key aim of the UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN) is to realign incentives and ways of working to promote the practice of rigorous, reproducible and transparent research. Instrumental to this aim are Local Network Leads (LNLs). Therefore, LNLs developed this short guidebook to enable new and current LNLs to: i) understand the role of an LNL, ii) be able to plan strategic and pragmatic objectives, and/or iii) be aware of the many benefits of being a LNL. We strongly encourage the reader to consult the UKRN [Terms of Reference](#), which informed this guidebook.

LNLs form one of three communities that make up the UKRN, the other two being institutions (represented by Institutional Leads [IL]) and stakeholders, such as funders and publishers (see *Figure 1*). LNLs represent the self-organising grassroots network within an institution. The aim of an LNL is to promote the ethos, values, and aims of the UKRN and to widen the adoption of best practices via circulating information, advocacy work, and/or providing training, among other activities. LNLs are represented on the UKRN Supervisory Board (see *Figure 2*). Some, but not all institutions have ILs, a current list can be found [here](#).

ILs are usually members of institutional senior management, for example the academic lead for Research Culture, with responsibility across all parts of an institution. IL and LNL operate independently of each other but are encouraged to develop a relationship and work in partnership to ensure their activities are coordinated, and also to create a channel of communication between the researcher community and senior management at that institution.

UKRN aims to increase the number of institutions with LNLs and local networks. LNLs can be any academic (e.g., from PhD student to professor) and/or professional service staff (e.g., librarians, technicians, research software engineers, support staff, etc.). An institution can have one or more LNL, with the aim being to increase the number of local networks led by LNLs within an institution and to enable the growth of a diverse local network drawn from diverse disciplines and career stages.

Although historically LNLs have been appointed in an *ad hoc* way, a nomination process is being developed during 2024 and will be formalized by UKRN no later than 2025. An LNL can serve for a fixed term with the option to extend, but must resign when moving institutions, ideally identifying a potential successor/s beforehand. All other things being equal, LNLs should consider people from underrepresented groups for leadership roles within the local network.

Figure 1: The UKRN communities and their role

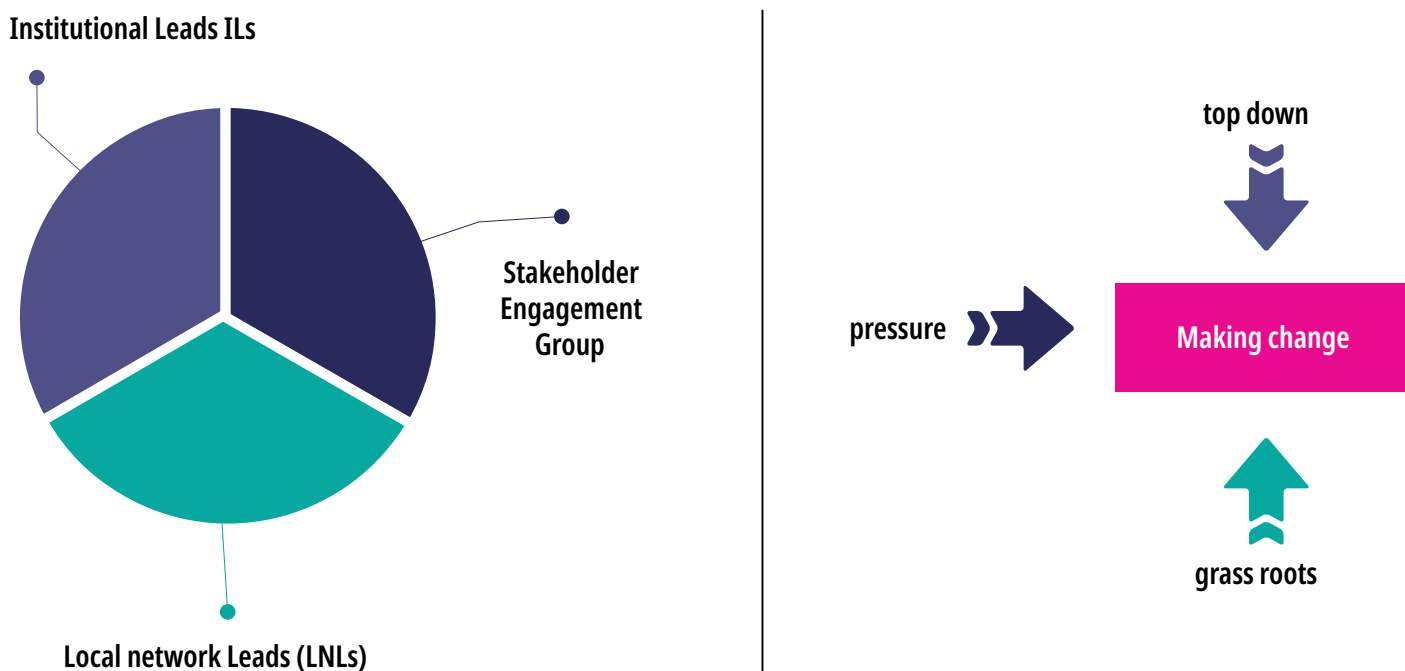
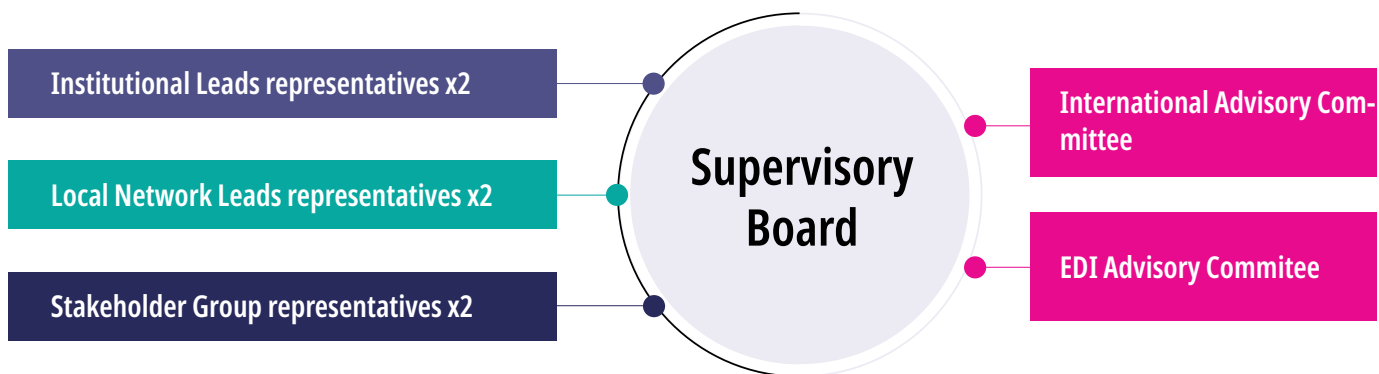


Figure 2: UKRN Governance structure

Governance Structure



The LNL role and activities

There can never be a one-size-fits-all approach to the activities of an LNL. In leading a grassroots network it is important that the LNL focuses on what is feasible within their workload and aligns with their interests, priorities, and career goals. Table 1 contains a range of activities associated with the LNL role, ranked according to difficulty and/or time needed. It is important to note that Table 1 is not an exhaustive list, and LNLs are NOT expected to include all of them within their LNL role. Moreover, the Table will likely require updating as the UKRN grows and its priorities change in response to the widening adoption of open research practices. It should therefore be taken as a reference to inform strategic objectives for what the LNL wants to achieve within their institution. Some activities are best suited for new networks, others may

be more appropriate for LNLs inheriting an existing network with mailing lists, journal clubs and LNL events already in place. LNLs should not attempt to lead all initiatives themselves, instead they should aim to build a group of like-minded peers within the local network, draw upon their strengths to have maximum reach and delegate tasks to them. The table is supplemented by appendices, which include detailed advice from fellow LNLs.

Table 1. A list of aims and objectives as listed in the UKRN Terms of References Version 4.3, with a corresponding checklist of suggested objectives to achieve these aims ranked according to their relative difficulty. Note that this table is supplemented by the appendices, which include miscellaneous advice that support activities in this table.



Aim	Objectives	Checklist of Activities
<p>1</p> <p>Work effectively with UKRN</p>	<p>1.1</p> <p>Act as the point of contact for UKRN. Disseminate information from UKRN to local network members on events, training, new initiatives, etc.</p> <p>Send regular updates to the national UKRN office with any news from the local network.</p>	<p>1.1 Easy</p> <p>Familiarise yourself with UKRN organisational structure, Terms of Reference, website and online resources. (e.g. OSF , YouTube channel).</p> <p>Inform UKRN admin (contact@ukrn.org) of your status as an LNL; they will then add you to their LNL webpage and their mailing list. If applicable, agree with other LNLs at your institution who should be the primary point-of-contact.</p> <p>Circulate UKRN mail/info to your networks mailing list (see 2.2).</p> <p>Provide info to UKRN admin (contact@ukrn.org) to inform the wider network of local network events and activities.</p> <p>Buddy system. Ask UKRN to pair you with a more senior LNL as a mentor (optional).</p>
	<p>1.2</p> <p>Attend LNL meetings to learn about current UKRN activities and initiatives.</p> <p>Communicate regularly with other UKRN representatives and LNLs to share knowledge on what works/doesn't work at other UKRN-affiliated institutions. This may include LNLs across the UKRN and/or within a regional hub.</p>	<p>1.2 Medium</p> <p>If possible, take advantage of the following networking opportunities (UKRN admin will provide details):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » LNL meeting (6 per year) » LNL Gather Town (9:30 - 10:00am GMT/BST, first Monday of the month) » Annual LNL summer retreat (usually June-August) » Annual UKRN meeting (usually March) » Combined LNL and IL meeting (previously March) » UKRN Slack channel » LNL workshops/seminars

Aim	Objectives	Checklist of Activities
	<p>1.3</p> <p>Participate in UKRN projects.</p>	<p>1.3 Hard</p> <p>Contribute to the open research primers (a preprint series that are an accessible introduction to important topics in open and reproducible scholarship) and/or other UKRN projects. Contact UKRN admin for information.</p>
<p>2</p> <p>Lead the Local Network</p>	<p>2.1</p> <p>Identify researchers, research students, and technical and professional support staff across the department (or school or faculty or institution depending on the context of the LNL) who are engaged in or interested in issues relating to rigorous, reproducible, and transparent research.</p> <p>Establish a Local Network of researchers, research students, technical and professional support staff.</p>	<p>2.1 Easy</p> <p>We recommend contacting the following, where possible, for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Institutional Lead (IL) should provide practical support and guidance (e.g., introduce you to senior levels across the institution), with LNLs feeding back to ILs on relevant issues. ILs and LNLs operate separately, but should coordinate their activities. Find out here if your institution has an IL. » Open Research Coordinator and Administrator (ORCA) – contact UKRN admin team to find out if your institution has one. The ORCA can provide information on open research activities happening across the institution, and potentially at other institutions. They may have training opportunities available via the UKRN Open Research Programme for members of the local network. Not all events are free, but there may be internal funding sources LNLs can apply to (e.g. Research England ‘Enhance Research Culture’ funds). » Library services offer a wealth of information (e.g., resources on research practices including open access and preprints, mailing lists, other advocates of open research).

Aim	Objectives	Checklist of Activities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Research integrity office – these may have staff dedicated to activities relating to open science or training which you could signpost or contribute to the development of. » Research groups – these usually include members interested in open research or joining the local network. » Doctoral Training Programmes
	<p>2.2</p> <p>Lead and co-ordinate a Local Network of researchers, research students, technical and professional support staff.</p> <p>Provide a regular forum wherein members of the local network can discuss ideas and activities to promote open research. These may include any one or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide, organise, or disseminate institutional training in rigorous, reproducible, and transparent research practices. • Coordinate and/organize responsible research seminars and initiatives within school/department. 	<p>2.2 Medium</p> <p>Start a mailing list, ideally via an institution-supported email app (e.g., Outlook). See here for a guide. Alternatively, or additionally, use a surrogate mailing list (e.g., the faculty/department mailing list).</p> <p>Start a journal club (ReproducibiliTea) or seminar series (RIOT Science Club), see the UKRN how-to videos here: ReproducibiliTea or RIOTS club.</p> <p>Provide training or give talks on open research practices (e.g., data management, code sharing, and other open research practices), which can be organised and led by yourself, professional services (e.g., librarians, research integrity officers), LNLs from other institutions, and/or invited experts.</p> <p>Incorporate information about your activities and/or open science into the departmental PhD onboarding process or in undergrad/postgrad teaching (e.g., one-off lectures/workshops).</p>

Aim	Objectives	Checklist of Activities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and notify the local network of external opportunities and resources that may be of use to members. Wider faculty and institutional activities can be coordinated between LNL and IL (where there is one). 	
	<p>2.3</p> <p>Provide a regular forum wherein members of the local network can discuss and agree priority activities, and then ensuring that those activities are pursued. These may include those mentioned in 2.2, but additionally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveying and tracking the landscape of rigorous, reproducible, and transparent research at the institution on an annual basis to assess enablers and barriers. Coordinate and/or organize responsible research seminars and initiatives across the institution. 	<p>2.3 Hard</p> <p>Establish an open research working group or committee within your institution, which should ideally include action-oriented senior academics and be created with the IL, where applicable. See the UKRN how-to video on setting up a working group.</p> <p>Conduct a survey on open research practices, this allows you to collect information on i) the prevalence of open research practices within your institution; ii) current demand for training; iii) the perceived value of open research (e.g., attendance at ReproducibiliTea events or workshops); and/or iv) barriers and enablers of open research. Such surveys are vital for informing your strategic objectives or ideas for activities. Surveys can also be used to make the case to senior management of the value of UKRN to the institution.</p> <p>Useful UKRN resources: Brief Open Research Survey and explanatory preprint. Note: there are several open research survey instruments, and UKRN is discussing with their owners how best to bring some coordination.</p> <p>Set up an Open Research Award (see UKRN primer to find out how). If an award exists, join the judging panel.</p>

Aim	Objectives	Checklist of Activities
		<p>LNLs at institutions involved in the Open Research Programme (ORP) may have train-the-trainer activities. Not all events are free, but there may be internal funding sources LNLs can apply to (e.g. Research England ‘Enhance Research Culture’ funds). Discuss with the institutional ORCA.</p>
<p>3</p> <p>Build and use relations with internal and external stakeholders</p>	<p>3.1</p> <p>Act as a point of contact within your department/school for inquiries and discussion about rigorous, reproducible, and transparent research practices for the network and the institution.</p> <p>Maintain dialogue and coordinate activities with other key groups within the institution that may promote rigorous, reproducible, and transparent research.</p> <p>Maintain dialogue with fellow LNLs across the UK as well as national and international organisations.</p>	<p>3.1 Easy</p> <p>Inform department head and admin staff of your appointment as LNL.</p> <p>Request letter of introduction from UKRN to senior management within the institution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Contact UK-wide organisations, such as the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA) and the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) to identify contacts at your institution that can help grow your local network. » Organise regular meetings with those identified in section 2.1. Ask if you can join committees so you have a senior academic audience. These audiences can be intimidating, so seek out individuals who can help (e.g., senior LNLs within/ outside your institution) using email, Slack or Gather Town meet ups). » Establish (or become) an Open Research Champion scheme. UKRN primer on how to do this. » Give talks within your institution to grow the local network, for example, research groups, departments, and/or Doctoral Training Programmes (with the latter having the added advantage that this may be reaching students across several institutions). » Spread awareness of your Local Network and its goals, arrange “meet-ups” with regional LNLs or contact academic institutions, research centres, and other research-related organisations.

Aim	Objectives	Checklist of Activities
	<p>3.2</p> <p>Act as a point of contact at a wider level e.g., faculty/institution.</p> <p>Advocate for training, education, and support in rigorous, reproducible, and transparent research at relevant internal committees and forums across the institution.</p> <p>Apply for internal/external funding to support open research activities/practices.</p>	<p>3.2 Medium</p> <p>Identify relevant faculty/institution-wide committees (e.g., those that support research or teaching practices) with the aim of providing agenda items, becoming a member and/or giving talks to relevant committees (e.g., research, teaching).</p> <p>Incorporate open research practices in undergraduate/postgraduate teaching, such as by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Setting up <u>consortium-based</u> undergraduate final year projects (contact UKRN admin for more information on these). » Creating an Open Research Prize for BSc or MSc theses. » Requiring pre-registration as a summative/formative assessment for BSc/MSc research reports (i.e., dissertations). <p>In England one funding source may be the internal 'Enhance Research Culture' allocation awarded to all institutions that receive QR funding.</p>
	<p>3.3</p> <p>Engage with the Senior Management Team to drive change and implement best practice.</p> <p>Engage with relevant external stakeholders, such as funders, UKRIO and UKCORI.</p>	<p>3.3 Hard</p> <p>Advocate for open research standing items on committee agendas.</p> <p>Give talks externally to represent the UKRN and your institution's role within it.</p> <p>Collaborate with other LNLs (regionally and/or nationally), participate in or co-create and deliver joint events and initiatives, share resources and best practice.</p> <p>Facilitate collaborations among researchers in your region/nationally to promote cross-disciplinary research.</p> <p>Reach out to international Reproducibility Networks to share best practice and work on joint projects.</p>



What are the benefits of being an LNL?

The role offers professional growth, skills development, networking opportunities, visibility and recognition, contribution to the scientific ecosystem and most importantly personal fulfilment of being able to contribute to the promotion of open research practices within a grassroots network.

Within an institution, and across the wider research community, being an LNL raises an individual's profile in terms of leadership, contribution to the research working environment, research integrity and improving the learning experience of under- and postgraduate students.

In creating and maintaining a Local Network, the LNL plays an important role within an institution. The collaborative work, training, and outreach done by an LNL all in the aid of better research practice can feed into institutional goals; for example, REF2029 highlights knowledge exchange/ reproducibility and impact.

Some institutions have formally recognised the LNL role and activities in terms of time allocation. For example, the LNL is a member of the Research Culture Committee (written into the committee's terms of reference) which reports directly to the University Research Committee. For example, by providing 0.1 FTE flexible funding to enable the LNL to buyout or extend their contract, or to increase LNL weekly hours.

Although the LNL role may not be recognised in appraisal and promotions procedures, the activities entailed by the role should certainly be recognised and viewed positively.

LNLs also benefit from access to training and other development opportunities offered by UKRN. By attending UKRN meetings, LNLs can network with LNLs based at other institutions.

Appendix 1: Stuck for ideas?

Here are some tips, tricks and ideas to impress people with in meetings

- The UKRN website hosts a range of [resources](#).
- Encourage the good open research practice of replacing journal names with article DOIs for example in departmental newsletters. This reduces bias for/against particular journals and journal impact factors, it also promotes the use of DOIs as persistent identifiers.
- Play the 'don't ask about the journal' game. Next time a colleague says they just published a paper, don't ask them where. Ask about the paper content instead.
- Get UKRN content onto departmental/faculty information screens (UKRN admin team are creating these and will make them available on UKRN OSF site).
- Find out if pre-registration is needed/required by the institutional information repository system, for example PURE or Pegasus. Lobby for this.
- Lobby to have pre-registration/ open data as a requirement for internal funding schemes.
- Include a slide at the end of presentations with information and links to open research activities and communication hubs at the institution.
- Give a talk on open research at a departmental seminar or as part of the institutional open research week, or invite an external speaker to do so (for example, a LNL from a similar institution).
- Lobby to include open research information as part of Doctoral Training Programme and researcher induction activities.
- Promote internal and external events (see the [Open Research Calendar](#)).
- Provide the person who sends out departmental/institution newsletters/circulars with LNL contact details, and distribute UKRN/open science material via them.
- Share slides of LNL open research talks/workshops/seminars using OSF or an institutional repository, thus demonstrating the LNL's own open research practice.
- Contribute Open Research content to existing university research events such as Research Festivals.

Appendix 2: Time management tips

- For a club that happens once a month, expect to spend roughly 1 to 2 hours per week to organize and host.
- Some commitments can be seasonal, for example commitments peaking in Spring time as events are organized to take place in early/late summer.
- Schedule specific times in the calendar for tasks like event planning, outreach, and networking.
- Delegate tasks to other members of the local network to help to distribute the workload more evenly.
- Talk with fellow LNLs about their experiences, and perhaps team up with them. This can provide efficiency savings, adds accountability, and can enable LNLs to be a bit more ambitious/achieve more. It can also avoid duplication of effort.



Appendix 3: Insight and reflection from fellow LNLs

Important to remember...

You might not get the institutional support that you're hoping for, that's OK. Opportunities will/do present themselves so keep doing what you can and be ready when a question is asked.

If you have a spare hour here's how best to use it to...

Arrange a chat with another LNL to share ideas, what you're up to.

Review the UKRN primers to get inspiration on how to plan for new initiatives in the future / improve existing initiatives.

The most valuable person to have on speed dial is...

LNLs from outside the institution, because within the institution the LNL role and local network will be very individual and context specific.

What not to do...

Don't attempt to lead all initiatives yourself! Spend time on building a network of like-minded peers within your local network, draw on their strengths to have maximum reach.

Don't view open research only via the lens of your own discipline and methodology.

The best bit is...

Seeing colleagues try out and love open research as a result of support you've initiated.

What I've gained from being an LNL is...

Building new connections with colleagues of different job roles and career levels across the whole university. I would not get this experience with any other role.

CRedit author statement

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