

International Women's Day at the NCC

Name: Leah Rider

Job role: Head of SME Delivery and Off-the-Shelf Delivery

Nationality: Half-English/half-Irish

Three things I love about my role are:

- The diversity of enquiries – in one day we can be handling enquiries about air taxis, lifeguard huts on beaches, lamp posts, furniture, cryogenic tanks, medical imaging scanners and more!
- Delivering impact – SMEs are the backbone of the UK economy and yet do not benefit from the same support mechanisms often afforded to larger businesses. Helping SMEs out with research, innovation and networking is so important to help grow their businesses – It feels great knowing that we've played a part in that.
- My team – I'm very fortunate to have a fantastic team of people around me who are not only hard-working and competent, but are also supportive of one another and make every day enjoyable. It's a great community who work hard and play hard.



“I completed a placement year at Airbus as part of my degree around the time the NCC was being set-up. I was hearing a lot of great things about the purpose of the NCC, so when it came to applying for graduate schemes a couple of years later, I was keen to apply. Thankfully, I was given a place and spent three and a half years learning the ropes about composite materials and manufacturing as a graduate research engineer. Three years ago I moved across to technical project management where I really found my feet, and have since gone on to programme management and now running the SME team.”

Leah Rider – Head of SME Delivery and Off-the-Shelf Delivery

"I'm really inspired by Jacinda Ardern. She has demonstrated that it is possible to be an amazingly competent and pragmatic leader whilst demonstrating kindness, compassion and empathy.

"I am a very feelings-centric person and I often ask myself whether I'm cut out to be a leader or a manager – I think perceptions are changing but you still hear people talking about managers and leaders needing to be tough and hard with people, not to show any vulnerability or humility or weakness.

"I think Ms. Arden has effortlessly demonstrated it is possible to deliver results without compromising on kindness. She is who I want to model my leadership style on."

"If I was giving my younger self advice, it would be the following three things:

1. If you find it difficult to believe and have confidence in yourself, instead try to believe in other people's confidence in you.
2. Credibility isn't all about how much knowledge and experience you have – it is also about trust and good relationships.
3. Give everything a go to the best of your ability – even when it feels terrifying or that you're pushed very far out of your comfort zone – because 99% of the time you'll surprise yourself and you never know what it will lead to."

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