

Charity Registration No. 1140827

Company Registration No. 07560997 (England and Wales)

SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE
ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016

SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	Mr J C Baker	(Chair, appointed 15 September 2015)
	Dr P Cotgreave	(Chair, retired 15 September 2015)
	Mr P L M Davies Professor Sir M Rawlins Professor O Leyser	(Treasurer)
	Mr A J Denoon Dr H J Munn	(Retired 15 September 2015) (Retired 15 September 2015)
	Mr M Sudbury Dr H Jamison Professor Sir S Wessely	
	Ms F Unsworth Ms J Revill Mr J Hitchcock	(Appointed 15 September 2015) (Appointed 15 September 2015) (Appointed 15 September 2015)
Senior Staff	Ms Fiona Fox OBE Ms Natasha Neill Mr Tom Sheldon Dr Edward Sykes	Chief Executive Head of Operations Senior Press Manager Senior Press Manager and Head of Mental Health & Neuroscience
Charity number	1140827	
Company number	07560997	
Principal address	215 Euston Road London NW1 2BE	
Registered office	215 Euston Road London NW1 2BE	
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SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

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SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

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SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016

The Trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2016.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the Charity's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)".

OBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Introduction

The Science Media Centre (SMC) has its roots in the influential House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee third report on Science and Society, which sought to renew public trust in science; the overall goal of the SMC is therefore to help achieve this aim by working to promote more balanced, accurate and rational coverage of the important science, health and environment stories that appear in the media.

The SMC was originally set up in April 2002 as a division of the Royal Institution of Great Britain (RIGB, Charity Registration No. 227938), and its financial structure was that of a restricted fund maintained by the RIGB. In April 2011 the SMC became independent and registered as a charity and a company limited by guarantee. The period ended 31 March 2016 is the SMC's fifth year as a fully independent organisation, but also its fourteenth year of existence.

Public opinion surveys continue to demonstrate that the public value science (1). The vast majority of those surveyed (1) (81%) agree that science will make people's lives easier, and think that scientists and engineers make a valuable contribution to society. However, more people feel uninformed about science than feel informed (55% vs 45%), and there is a considerable appetite for hearing more about science. Traditional mainstream media such as television and print newspapers continue to be the most common sources of information that people access, providing an opportunity for accurate, evidence-based information to reach a mass audience.

The SMC's priority is to promote, for the benefit of the public and policymakers, accurate and evidence-based information about science in the media, particularly on controversial and headline news stories as this is when most confusion and misinformation occurs. The objects of the SMC are as follows:

"To advance the education of the public in science and engineering and all their related branches and disciplines, particularly by the dissemination of research and information about science to the media."

In order to meet its charitable objectives, the SMC's main activities include:

- working with scientists, engineers and other experts from the scientific community, and supporting them to engage with the media;
- working with journalists and providing them with information about science and its related disciplines;
- supporting press officers when they are working on complex and contentious science, health and environment stories that could be misrepresented.
- providing expertise and advice on issues relating to science and the media.

There has been no change during the period in the policies adopted in furtherance of the objects, and the Trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the SMC should undertake.

(1) Public Attitudes to Science 2014, Ipsos MORI study conducted for the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016

Aims and Objectives

The SMC's philosophy is:

“The media will DO science better when scientists DO the media better.”

Our main activities will allow us to achieve our philosophy and our objects - by ensuring that the accuracy and balance of science represented by the mainstream media is improved. As an organisation we predominantly work on new research and the breaking news of the day, meaning our long and short term aims are very similar. For us, the most important thing is that we continue to be able to pro-actively respond to the next breaking news story or controversial research paper.

Staff are the main resource of the SMC and six members of staff are dedicated to the press office element of the Centre with the remaining two members of staff providing essential support to the running of the Centre.

Volunteers

The SMC was pleased to be able to move to a paid internship scheme this year for those individuals who undertake short-term work placements to gain experience in the work the SMC does and assist with its day-to-day activities. The SMC is pleased to note that many of them go on to secure full time roles in public engagement and science communication.

The Centre continues to benefit from volunteers through our database of expert scientists, who willingly give up their time to help achieve the aims of the SMC through engagement with the media. A scientist might write an article for the Observer on a controversial science subject, give an interview for BBC News on a new breakthrough in their field, or speak to a journalist at the Daily Mail about a planned exclusive article in their area of expertise.

Many of these requests to scientists happen at short notice or outside of normal working hours, yet without this work, the SMC would not exist. The Trustees wish to record their sincere thanks to all concerned.

Public benefit statement

The Trustees have had due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on the public benefit requirement under the Charities Act 2006. The charity is actively advancing its objects for the public benefit by the means described above. The Science Media Centre is delivering a wide range of services for the benefit of the public and policymakers. The potential beneficiaries of the charity include all those in the UK affected by issues of significant science, health and environmental impact.

SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Summary

The Science Media Centre exists to respond to complex and often controversial science stories in the national news media, and remains the predominant independent charity in the UK to do so. When a story breaks or new research is published, the SMC encourages appropriate experts to engage with the media to ensure that resulting coverage is accurate and measured while also providing evidence-based information to the journalists covering the story.

The SMC works on stories across science, health and environment, and major issues in 2015-16 included: mitochondrial donation, human genome editing, the Paris climate talks, the Zika outbreak in Central and South America, the British winter floods and the impact of the UK potentially leaving the EU on British science. It has also worked on issues such as e-cigarettes, nutrition (especially dietary fats), bees and neonicotinoid pesticides, the effectiveness and risks of psychiatric drugs and the possible transmission of Alzheimer's disease.

In total, the SMC responded to over 300 breaking stories or new scientific studies and reports, held over 50 press briefings and dealt with over 700 media enquiries from individual journalists. All of these activities represent the core of the SMC's remit and contributed to its performance towards its key objectives and activities as listed above.

The SMC also works to promote the views of the scientific community on issues with scientific relevance, and helps to ensure that their expertise is available to the national news media, and through them policy-makers and the public.

This year the SMC reviewed the long term financial position of the organisation - and made changes to ensure its stability. There has been a renewed effort to increase income and decrease expenditure, especially following the loss of several funders. As a result of this work, the SMC performed significantly better than originally budgeted, with a year-end surplus of £55,378.

Working with scientists, engineers and other experts, and supporting them to engage with the media:

Supporting scientists is one of the most valued aspects of the SMC's work, and by working with individuals and press offices we encourage their engagement with the media.

The SMC runs a few events each year to introduce scientists, engineers and other experts to the importance and public benefits of working with the media, to encourage them to get involved, and to support them to be able to do so. The events are aimed at experts with little or no media experience, and include talks and panel sessions with other experts who have media experience, and with journalists who can explain the realities of their work and how best to help them cover science accurately for the public.

This year the SMC ran an 'Introduction to the Media' event for specialist diet and nutrition scientists at the University of East Anglia. The event was attended by nearly 60 scientists from these fields of research from a range of institutions. All attendees who answered the feedback survey rated the event positively, and all said they'd recommend the event to colleagues.

The SMC also ran a 'mini Intro' event in collaboration with the University of Edinburgh, which was attended by around 50 scientists and was well-received. Events such as these are a valuable and proven way of encouraging sometimes nervous experts to engage with the media and work with the SMC to ensure accurate media coverage on controversial issues.

Sometimes scientists are threatened because their research findings do not find favour with prejudiced groups or individuals. The SMC seeks to support and encourage them personally to ensure that soundly based research evidence becomes available in the public domain.

Working with journalists and providing them with information about science and its related disciplines:

The main services that the SMC provides to journalists are:

Rapid Reactions

When a science story breaks the SMC sets about encouraging leading scientific experts to drop what they're doing and engage with the story and offer sensible evidence-based comments on the situation. The SMC then makes these experts and their comments available to journalists at all major UK news outlets, who can follow up with further queries or interview requests. The Rapid Reaction service is a real example of a win-win scenario for science and the media: the busy and eager news journalists are delighted to get credible experts to talk to, and the SMC ensures that the public is hearing the best science from the people who are leading the field at the most critical time. Examples of Rapid Reactions include stories like: red and processed meat and risk of cancer, divestment from fossil fuel companies, the Zika outbreak, the VW emissions scandal, and glyphosate and human health.

Roundups

This service is completely unique to the SMC and has become a key tool for the Centre and for specialist science journalists. The SMC issues written comments from leading, relevant experts on embargoed science stories that offer a critique and valuable insights that journalists can use to cover the new study in an accurate and responsible way. Statements from independent scientists can help reporters identify the strengths and weaknesses of a new study and put it into the context of wider scientific knowledge. These comments can indicate how surprising or important the findings are and describe any implications. Print and broadcast journalists can lift quotes for their reports and follow-up for further interviews with the experts. Recent examples have helped journalists to navigate new studies on new reports on diet and obesity, e-cigarettes, CO2 emissions, potentially transmissible Alzheimer's disease proteins, alcohol guidelines, supplements in pregnancy and autism, and rates of dementia in the UK.

Briefings

The Science Media Centre runs regular press briefings for UK news journalists. News briefings give scientists the opportunity to explain complex, political, or controversial news findings directly to an audience of journalists. Background briefings address a wide range of topical issues where experts feel that accurate, evidence-based information has been missing from the media and public debate. SMC briefings have proved to be instrumental in ensuring scientifically-accurate media coverage of certain issues. Recent examples have focused on the Zika virus outbreak, genome editing in human embryos, flooding, climate change, quality of animal research, antidepressants, and paedophilia.

The SMC is also popular as a neutral venue for scientific institutions who want to speak out on issues of joint concern, such as the UK science budget and the EU Referendum.

Additional services

In addition to responding to the most important news stories of the day, providing accurate information about the latest developments in science to journalists, and running regular press briefings, the SMC also handles ad hoc enquiries from journalists seeking an expert to interview, or background information on a science, health or environment story which they may be working on.

The SMC continued to build on the success of its Before the Headlines project, which provides journalists with easily-understood statistical analyses of new scientific studies. The project focuses on studies with complicated statistics which may be particularly open to misunderstanding and misreporting. Drawing on the expertise and advice of a network of experienced statisticians and epidemiologists, the SMC issued 12 analyses for journalists on new research, including studies on chocolate consumption and risk of cardiovascular disease, sweeteners and weight loss and organic and conventional milk and meat. Over the previous year, the SMC expanded the pool of experts it works with on the Before the Headlines project, to around 50.

The SMC also produces Factsheets on controversial or complex topics in science, which give an overview of the key facts of the topic that journalists (specialist and non-specialist) can use to ensure the accuracy of their articles. These Factsheets are produced in consultation with leading scientists in the field, and in the last year documents on gene drives and the Zika virus were produced. Alongside Factsheets, the SMC also produces Briefing Notes, which are comprehensive summaries of the key scientific points on controversial science topics that can be utilised by general news producers and presenters. Briefing Notes are designed to be read rapidly and kept to hand in a studio or newsroom. Work on a synthetic biology Briefing Note is currently underway.

Supporting press officers when they are working on complex science, health and environment stories:

Many of the SMC's core activities rely on working with and supporting press officers at other organisations, including when they have expertise on an issue in the headlines, or when their own institution or scientists are the subject of media interest. Press officers often approach the SMC for its guidance and expertise on media stories, particularly when an issue is complex and controversial.

The SMC also provides support for press officers by sharing advice and championing the crucial role they play in responsible science communication. SMC staff are often invited to give talks and presentations at scientific organisations and meetings, aiding both the press officers and encouraging their scientists to engage with the media, whilst raising awareness of the SMC's work. Staff speak at universities, learned societies, institutions, companies and charities. In particular this year SMC staff have presented sessions or given talks at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Society for Endocrinology annual conference, the BioIndustry Association, Science Foundation Ireland in Dublin, the Institute of Food Research, the University of Nottingham, Medicines in Agriculture conference, Public Health England Centre for Radiation, Chemicals and Environmental Hazards, University of Oxford Alliance of Mental Health Research Funders meeting, and the Stempra press officer training day.

Providing expertise and advice on issues relating to science and the media:

The SMC is often called upon to comment on and provide expertise in relation to its overview and experience of science in the media. This year SMC staff have been featured in articles and comment pieces published in Research Fortnight, The Guardian, BBC, The Lancet, The BMJ and The Times.

The SMC is also often invited by press officers to co-ordinate media activities when a number of scientific organisations are working on the same issue e.g. use of animals in research, patient data and mitochondrial DNA transfer.

SMC staff members engage and share their expertise with the wider scientific community through their roles on the boards and advisory committees of other scientific organisations. Fiona Fox is Chair of the Progress Educational Trust and on the advisory committee for the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, the Grantham Institute for Climate Change, and the National Institute for Health Research Health Protection Units, and Ed Sykes is a non-voting member of the advisory board of the CFS UK Research Collaborative.

The SMC also seizes opportunities to share its expertise with formal inquiries into relevant topics on science and the media. In the last year, SMC staff submitted written evidence and then were called upon to provide oral evidence to the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee inquiry into 'Science in Emergencies: UK lessons from Ebola'. The SMC has also provided written evidence and was called to appear before two other ongoing inquiries of the same committee.

Restricted Fund - Working with mental health and neuroscience experts:

A restricted fund in the form of grants and donations from several organisations within the mental health research community continues to allow the SMC to employ a full-time member of staff to work specifically on mental health and neuroscience stories in the media.

The post relies on a strong network of experts across the fields of psychology, psychiatry, neurology and neuroscience whose specialisms range from dementia to depression and from cognitive behavioural therapy to antipsychotic medicines. There has been a strong drive to increase the strength of this network and the database now has nearly 400 experts who fill this role.

During the period covered by this annual review there were 13 press briefings on mental health and neuroscience topics including links between SSRI antidepressants and violent crime, a report on the impact of autism on mortality, reviewing how we treat dyslexia, a link between tobacco and schizophrenia, the consequences of perinatal depression and new treatments for Alzheimer's disease. 64 roundups and rapid reactions covered issues ranging from the mental health of the A320 crash co-pilot to the genetics of eating disorders, the potential spread of Alzheimer's through surgery, and links between antidepressants and birth defects.

Other activities

The SMC also carries out a number of other activities alongside the core programme of services and projects it runs, detailed above. All of these involve working with and supporting scientists, journalists and press officers, and fulfil the SMC's charitable objective to promote, for the benefit of the public and policymakers, accurate and evidence-based information about science in the media.

The SMC continues to ensure that the voice of the mainstream scientific community is heard on issues that concern them, and works alongside both scientists and press officers to make sure wider society is hearing from the best experts. The SMC played an active role in highlighting the concerns of the scientific community on the effect a proposed anti-lobbying clause in research grants would have on the willingness of scientists to engage with the media, public, and policy-makers on crucial science topics. SMC staff members not only shared updates with the community and supported action by scientists, but also voiced their own concerns in articles in outlets such as The Times and Research Fortnight.

Earlier in the year, the SMC played a similar role in voicing scientific concerns about proposed amendments to the Civil Service Code, which would have had a similar effect on scientists engaging with the media. The ability of the SMC to act as a coordinator when the scientific community wants to speak as one gives it a unique position in the efforts to promote the voices of the scientific community to the media and facilitate evidence-based policy.

Although the core focus of the SMC's work is very much within the UK, it has continued to develop its working relationships with other SMCs outside of the UK whose working model is based on that of the UK SMC. This has helped to raise awareness internationally of the significant public education benefits of encouraging scientists to engage with the media and working with journalists to help them cover science accurately and informatively, and has also significantly raised the profile of the global SMC's. In particular, the UK SMC has continued to work closely with the newly opened German SMC, including hosting a staff member for several days and providing advice when needed. The UK SMC has also worked productively with the SMCs in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, as well as the SMC-esque organisation Genetic News Service (GENeS), based in the USA.

Fundraising

Establishing a long term financial plan for the SMC highlighted the need to increase funding on a yearly basis. With the loss of several funders within the financial year, identification of new funders, and increases of donations from existing funders was a priority throughout the latter half of the year.

The fundraising effort resulted in securing £16,000 from increasing existing donations and £38,500 from identifying new supporters - offsetting the decreases in donations and lost funders which represented a £46,000 decrease.

Fundraising at the SMC is carried out by three members of staff, as part of their role. Donations make up the majority of the income of the SMC, and are mostly from organisations which have supported the SMC for many years.

Impact

The period 2015-16 has been a year of consolidation and renewed focus for the SMC, with the first full year with a senior management team, and a focus on ensuring the long term stability of the Centre. Staff have continued to show incredible commitment to the mission of the SMC and yet again the impact of the SMC in ensuring more accurate, balanced and rational coverage of science in the UK media has been strong and measurable.

The work of the SMC is often difficult to judge through numbers alone. Success can mean a poor study or unpublished poster isn't covered in the newspapers, or is on page eight rather than the front page. It might also mean front pages explaining a revolutionary science technique with nuance or balance, or standfirsts explaining that leading scientists questioned the latest findings.

During the past twelve months, we held over 50 press conferences with an average attendance of ten journalists. We released over 300 rapid reactions and round ups on breaking news stories or new scientific studies and reports, leading to around 1,300 expert comments being issued to national news journalists. These comments appeared in print and online over 1800 times in the UK alone - providing the public with accurate and balanced scientific expertise.

Commentary on the objectives as described in last year's trustee report follows:

1. To hold a publications review to ensure that the SMC is both keeping its stakeholders fully abreast of developments and asking them to engage with issues. This review will also make certain that the outcomes of the strategic review are reflected consistently throughout the SMC's publications.

The publications review has been split into two sections. The first was a rigorous assessment of every single document used and issued by the SMC to engage with its stakeholders. Each document was catalogued, filed and checked to ensure that it was up-to-date, conveyed our work accurately and reflected the outcomes of the strategic review. This included spotting instances where we could increase our efficiency by producing new documents and templates, as well as archiving those which were no longer relevant. Having now assessed all of these documents, the ones which have been earmarked for large-scale changes are being reproduced during stage two of this process.

2. To hold a specialist 'Introduction to the Media' event that will focus on nutrition, with the aim of increasing the number of scientists on the SMC database who are able to comment on such stories.

In September 2015 one of our senior press officers ran a specialist Introduction to the News Media for nutrition and diet scientists at the University of East Anglia in Norwich. At the SMC we are constantly busy with diet stories so it's vital to remind the scientific community how important it is to continue engaging with journalists and that every journalist request is an opportunity to increase the accuracy of articles on this topic and to help the public get to grips with what can often be confusing, and sometimes apparently contradictory, evidence. 58 scientists with expertise in nutrition, obesity, dietetics, diabetes and food science came along to hear about the SMC and to hear from journalists and scientists about their experiences of media engagement. The journalist panel, which included Lawrence McGinty (formerly of ITV News), Nick Collins (formerly at the Telegraph), and Chloe Lambert (freelance) was particularly popular.

All attendees who answered the feedback survey rated the event positively, and all said they'd recommend the event to colleagues. One said "I found the event very useful! I learned a great deal about how the media operates. I also had no idea about SMC so it was great to discover that this organisation exists and to learn how to get involved with SMC in the future." We recruited a small number of experts from the event.

3. To review how the SMC might better engage with non-specialist journalists

Whilst the BBC is well-resourced with science, medical and environment reporters, it is also the case that many general news journalists and producers with no specialist science knowledge end up reporting science stories or stories with a significant science angle. With the aim of helping non-specialists at the BBC navigate science stories by outlining what the SMC offers them, the team presented a session at New Broadcasting House in February which was arranged by the Health, Science and Environment Assignment Editor, who we met late last year through our chair of trustees. We were introduced to producers who we have since worked with from Newsnight, general news and newsgathering amongst others. We will be following up further with the BBC and also extending this strategy to other broadcasters.

SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016

4. To explore possibilities to increase the number of industry scientists on the SMC database.

The SMC exists to represent the views of mainstream scientific experts through the national news media, and that applies as much to scientists and engineers working in industry as to academics. We met with scientists and communications professionals from several organisations including giving talks to the Bioindustry Association communications advisory committee meeting, the biotech industry Media Question Time, a seminar for plastics & packaging experts, and to agriculture experts at the RUMA Conference. We also met with senior scientists and the head of communications at Syngenta.

We held an Introduction to the News Media day which was attended by several industry experts, and we continue to seek the views of privately as well as publically employed experts on important scientific subjects in the media.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Funding

The SMC is funded principally by donations from trusts and foundations, science bodies and other organisations, companies, charities, and government and related agencies. The SMC is independent from its funders who do not gain influence over the SMC's work in return for their financial support.

To protect the SMC from any undue influence the SMC caps donations from any one institution at 5% of annual income. The SMC's Trustees and Advisory Committee have agreed on a small number of exceptions to the 5% upper limit on donations. These exceptions are large trusts like the Wellcome Trust.

The SMC is open and transparent with regard to its funding, and all funders are listed on the SMC website. This year the SMC also made steps to further increase openness and listed all funders under bands for their total donated amount within a financial year.

Risk Management

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the SMC is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate that exposure. These risks are detailed on the Risk Register for the SMC with information on the current practice and strategy used to mitigate the risk. This register is reviewed annually by Trustees, with delegated responsibility to the Audit and Risk Committee to review the register at each meeting.

The current risk register pays particular attention to the risks around staffing, funding and issuing a libellous comment, or a comment from a scientist who is not credible. To mitigate these risks all staff have undergone libel training, key skills are cascaded through staff to minimise the loss of any one member of the team, and recruits to the database must meet certain requirements. Review of the scientists is also continual to ensure that they are commenting within their areas of expertise. Risks for loss of funding are mitigated by close monitoring of the finances of the SMC and a wide range and number of supporting organisations.

Transactions and financial position

In its fifth year of operation as a fully independent organisation, the SMC has again continued to establish a strong financial position and build up an appropriate level of reserves by year end.

The Statement of Financial Activities shows that the total income to year end was £576,335. This is an increase from the previous year (£520,815 in 2014-15) and represents significant effort by the fundraising team to maintain income levels despite the loss of several supporters. This was achieved by both new approaches to organisations working within the field, and by asking existing supporters to increase their donations.

Total expenditure for the year was £520,957 (£508,669 in 2014-15) of which 94% (93% in 2014-15) was spent on charitable activities directly carrying out the Charity's key objectives.

The activities for the year therefore resulted in a surplus of £55,378 (£12,146 in 2014-15).

SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016

Investment policy

The Trustees of the SMC have decided that the SMC reserves should remain in high interest saving accounts, with lower risk and quicker access, rather than higher risk investments. This is subject to regular review.

Reserves policy

The current reserves policy was assessed to ensure it reflected why and when the reserves would be used.

Following discussions between Trustees and senior management, it was agreed that the reserves policy should change to be more specific to the needs of the SMC. It was agreed that reserves would be used to support the SMC during a short defined period of deficit budget, allowing for new sources of income or reductions in expenditure to be identified. Such a scenario should be resolved expediently, so the reserves policy of the SMC was amended accordingly.

It is therefore the policy of the Charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between eight and fourteen months' expenditure (approximately £347,000 - £608,000 for this period).

This level of reserves has been built up and maintained throughout the period; the Charity holds £505,027 in reserves as of 31 March 2016 (£449,649 in 2014-15).

The current level of reserves are well within the range deemed appropriate by the Trustees, therefore future years will aim to add a small increases to the reserves by consistently operating at surplus.

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

The current period has seen the SMC's fifth year as a fully independent charity. The Trustees feel that the SMC is operating from a position of strength, in terms of both its core activities and financial security. The expertise of senior management and staff at the SMC will ensure that these future plans are given sufficient resources and achieved.

The following priorities have been identified for the coming year:

1. Continue to keep up to date with new contentious issues, responding with expert comment, media briefings and supporting the scientists working in these areas.

We will achieve this by monitoring the media and speaking regularly to journalists and scientists. We will closely monitor 'bubbling' controversies in the media and scientific community.

2. To hold a specialist 'Introduction to the Media' event focusing on nuclear science, with the aim of increasing the number of scientists on the SMC database who are able to comment on such stories. This will be achieved by using the existing knowledge within the SMC, to organise and execute a high level event.

We will achieve this by working with the Dalton Institute and all other nuclear institutes and companies to identify experts most likely to be needed in the media.

3. To increase the number of experts in media favourite topics such as diet and health and e-cigarettes and human genome editing.

We will achieve this by speaking to existing experts and monitoring scientific literature.

4. To respond to relevant policy consultations and lead on sector wide issues where appropriate to the role of the SMC

We will achieve this by monitoring all policy discussions relevant to the SMC expertise and responding when appropriate.

The Trustees have also highlighted the important of strengthening the links with networks of experts and ensuring key stakeholders are engaging with the SMC and updating us as appropriate.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Organisational structure and decision making

The SMC is an independent charity and company limited by guarantee (Company Registration No. 7560997, England & Wales; Charity Registration No. 1140827). The Board of Trustees is the major decision-making body and it meets at least three times a year.

Trustees are individuals distinguished in the field of science, engineering, medicine, journalism, communications, finance, law and policy. The SMC considers each of the Trustees to be independent in character and judgement, and understands that they have no relationships that are likely to affect, or could appear to affect, their judgements with regard to the SMC. Declarations of interest are required from new Trustees upon appointment and update annually, every meeting of the Board also requires that any new interests are declared.

All of the Trustees also act as directors of the company, but none has any beneficial interest in the company and no remuneration is provided except for reasonable travel and subsistence costs. These costs totalled £539 (£547 in 2014-15)

Policy is determined by the Trustees, on the advice of the Advisory Committee and others, and its implementation is delegated to the Chief Executive who, in conjunction with a team of seven additional staff, the Advisory Committee and Trustees as appropriate, undertakes the necessary work.

A Senior Management Team comprising the Chief Executive, two Senior Press Managers and the Head of Operations allows for better distribution of organisational responsibility and both staff and Trustees continue to be happy with the structure. The Head of Operations has particular responsibility for issues relating to governance and the Treasurer for the financial management of the organisation. This year an Audit and Risk Committee was formed for particular responsibility on matters relating to the annual audit, financial planning and risk review and management.

The Advisory Committee is a principal advisory committee to the Trustees and is a voluntary group of distinguished experts from the fields of science, engineering, medicine, journalism and communications, who provide expertise and advice. The group meets three times a year.

The Audit and Risk Committee is another principal committee of the SMC and deals with issues such as financial planning, pensions, the annual audit and risk review and management. The group consists of the chair, Prof. Sir Mike Rawlins, two Trustees and two external members, with the Treasurer and members of senior management in an observational capacity. The Committee meets twice a year.

The Remuneration Committee meets at least once a year and is chaired by Mr Mark Sudbury. This committee reports directly to the Trustees.

The SMC is very grateful to the members of all committees for their valuable contributions.

The Trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the period are:

Mr J C Baker (Chair)	
Professor Sir M Rawlins	
Professor O Leyser	
Mr A J Denoon	(Resigned 15 September 2015)
Dr H J Munn	(Resigned 15 September 2015)
Mr M Sudbury	
Dr H Jamison	
Professor Sir S Wessely	
Ms F Unsworth	(Appointed 15 September 2015)
Ms J Revill	(Appointed 15 September 2015)
Mr J E Hitchcock	(Appointed 15 September 2015)
Mr P L M Davies (Treasurer)	
Dr P Cotgreave	(Resigned 15 September 2015)

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016

Staff

The SMC has eight full time permanent members of staff and the Trustees record their appreciation of the efforts of the staff, who have again made an enormous contribution to the success of the SMC during the year.

Pay and remuneration

The SMC pay structure involves set salary bands with 'spine points' which represent 5% pay increases.

The agreed policy of the SMC is to review the performance of staff through appraisals. Managers will then recommend staff for an increase which will be considered by the Remuneration Committee based on the affordability of the increase to the SMC and the wider economic circumstances. Managers provide additional information on each proposed increase, explaining the case for the individual. If an employee is at the top of their range a non-consolidated bonus (not subject to pension contributions) may be considered. The salary of the Chief Executive is considered separately by the Remuneration Committee who make recommendations to the Trustees for all staff.

The SMC does not review cost of living for staff, but is committed to conducting external salary benchmarking every two years. This information is then considered by the Remuneration Committee in their recommendations to Trustees.

Trustee Appointment, Induction & Training

Trustees are appointed in accordance with the SMC's Memorandum and Articles of Association and Regulations, taking into account the benefits of appointing a person who is able, by virtue of his or her personal or professional qualifications, to make a contribution to the pursuit of the objects or the management of the Charity.

Trustees and staff consider the skills gaps formed by departing Trustees, and nominate appropriate individuals with skills to match. These individuals are then approached, and if willing, meet with current Trustees and staff to learn more about the SMC and what it means to be a Trustee. Prospective trustees are then proposed and appointed at the AGM.

The SMC undertakes a comprehensive induction programme for all new Trustees, which includes induction materials relating to its purposes and finances, the powers of the Trustees and information about day-to-day running of the SMC. Key documents are provided, such as the SMC's Memorandum and Articles of Association and Regulations, the Charity Commission's Essential Trustee guide, up-to-date accounts, and minutes of the most recent Trustee meetings. Prospective trustees may also attend relevant Trustee meetings as an observer as part of the induction process. Trustees continue to be supported through on-going training, with skills requirements regularly reviewed.

Auditor

The SMC's auditor, Clarkson Hyde LLP, were appointed auditors to the company. A resolution proposing that they be reappointed will be put to the Trustees.

The Trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

Mr J C Baker (Chair)
Trustee
Dated: 21 October 2016



SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016

The Trustees, who are also the directors of Science Media Centre for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the accounts in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company Law requires the Trustees to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these accounts, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts; and
- prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS OF SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

We have audited the financial statements of Science Media Centre for the year ended 31 March 2016 set out on pages 15 to 23. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102.

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under section 154 of that Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and its trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and auditor

As explained more fully in the statement of Trustees' responsibilities set out on page 12, the Trustees, who are also the directors of Science Media Centre for the purposes of company law are responsible for the preparation of the accounts and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view.

The Trustees have elected for the accounts to be audited in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 rather than the Companies Act 2006. Accordingly we have been appointed as auditors under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with regulations made under section 154 of that Act.

Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the accounts in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the accounts

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the accounts sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the accounts are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the charitable company's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Trustees; and the overall presentation of the accounts. In addition, we read all the financial and non-financial information in the Trustees' Annual Report to identify material inconsistencies with the audited accounts and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in the course of performing the audit. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

Opinion on accounts.

In our opinion the accounts:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2016 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

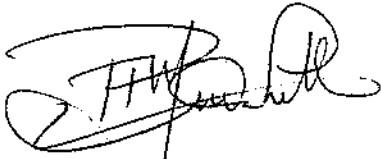
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

TO THE MEMBERS OF SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities Act 2011 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report is inconsistent in any material respect with the accounts; or
- the accounts are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.



Peter Minchell (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Clarkson Hyde LLP

21 October 2016

Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditor

3rd Floor
Chancery House
St Nicholas Way
Sutton
Surrey
SM1 1JB

Clarkson Hyde LLP is eligible to act as an auditor in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006



Clarkson Hyde

SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2016 £	Total 2015 £
<u>Income from:</u>					
Donations and legacies	2	506,580	48,000	554,580	496,663
<u>Charitable activities</u>					
Grants received	3	-	20,000	20,000	22,500
Investments	4	1,755	-	1,755	1,652
Total income		508,335	68,000	576,335	520,815
<u>Expenditure on:</u>					
<u>Raising funds</u>					
Fundraising and publicity	5	24,607	6,152	30,759	32,503
Charitable activities	6	423,316	66,882	490,198	476,166
Total resources expended		447,923	73,034	520,957	508,669
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers		60,412	(5,034)	55,378	12,146
Gross transfers between funds		(5,034)	5,034	-	-
Net income for the year/ Net movement in funds		55,378	-	55,378	12,146
Fund balances at 1 April 2015		449,649	-	449,649	437,503
Fund balances at 31 March 2016		505,027	-	505,027	449,649

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2016

	Notes	2016		2015	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	10		2,807		4,347
Current assets					
Debtors	12	2,506		7,291	
Cash at bank and in hand		519,489		444,562	
		<u>521,995</u>		<u>451,853</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		<u>(19,775)</u>		<u>(6,551)</u>	
Net current assets			502,220		445,302
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>505,027</u>		<u>449,649</u>
Income funds					
Unrestricted funds			505,027		449,649
			<u>505,027</u>		<u>449,649</u>

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2016, although an audit has been carried out under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011. No member of the company has deposited a notice, pursuant to section 476, requiring an audit of these accounts under the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act and for preparing accounts which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to accounts, so far as applicable to the company.

The financial statements were approved by the Board and authorised for issue on 21 October 2016 and are signed on its behalf by:

Mr J C Baker (Chair)
Trustee



21/10/2016

Company Registration No. 07560997

SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016**

	Notes	2016 £	£	2015 £	£
Cash flows from operating activities					
Cash generated from operations	13		74,187		22,859
Investing activities					
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(1,015)		(702)	
Interest received		1,755		1,652	
Net cash generated from investing activities			740		950
Net cash used in financing activities			-		-
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents			74,927		23,809
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			444,562		420,753
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year			519,489		444,562

1 Accounting policies

Company information

Science Media Centre is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is 215 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BE.

1.1 Accounting convention

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102"), "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" the Statement of Recommended Practice for charities applying FRS 102, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice as it applies from 1 January 2015. The Charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The accounts have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a true and fair view. This departure has involved following the Statement of Recommended Practice for charities applying FRS 102 rather than the version of the Statement of Recommended Practice which is referred to in the Regulations but which has since been withdrawn.

The accounts are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the Charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The accounts have been prepared on the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

These accounts for the year ended 31 March 2016 are the first accounts of Science Media Centre prepared in accordance with FRS 102, The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland. The date of transition to FRS 102 was 1 April 2014. The reported financial position and financial performance for the previous period are not affected by the transition to FRS 102.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the accounts, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the Charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the Trustees' continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the accounts.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives unless the funds have been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the accounts.

1.4 Incoming resources

Income is recognised when the Charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Donations are recognised once the Charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016

1 Accounting policies (Continued)

1.5 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Fixtures, fittings & equipment 25% straight line

2 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2016	Total 2015
	£	£	£	£
Donations and gifts	451,580	48,000	499,580	446,663
Grants receivable for core activities	55,000	-	55,000	50,000
	<u>506,580</u>	<u>48,000</u>	<u>554,580</u>	<u>496,663</u>
For the year ended 31 March 2015	<u>471,669</u>	<u>24,994</u>		<u>496,663</u>

3 Charitable activities

	Total 2016	Total 2015
	£	£
Grants received (restricted funds)	<u>20,000</u>	<u>22,500</u>
For the year ended 31 March 2015		<u>22,500</u>
Restricted funds		<u>22,500</u>

4 Investments

	2016	2015
	£	£
Interest receivable	<u>1,755</u>	<u>1,652</u>

SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016

5 Raising funds

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2016	Total 2015
	£	£	£	£
<u>Fundraising and publicity</u>				
Staff costs	24,607	6,152	30,759	32,503
	<u>24,607</u>	<u>6,152</u>	<u>30,759</u>	<u>32,503</u>
For the year ended 31 March 2015				
Fundraising and publicity	<u>26,002</u>	<u>6,501</u>		<u>32,503</u>

6 Charitable activities

	Staff costs	Other direct costs	Governance costs	Total 2016	Total 2015
	£	£	£	£	£
Staff costs	377,284	-	-	377,284	341,965
Depreciation and impairment	-	2,555	-	2,555	2,986
Other direct costs	-	95,640	-	95,640	118,566
	<u>377,284</u>	<u>98,195</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>475,479</u>	<u>463,517</u>
Share of governance costs (see note 7)	-	-	14,719	14,719	12,649
	<u>377,284</u>	<u>98,195</u>	<u>14,719</u>	<u>490,198</u>	<u>476,166</u>

SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016

7 Support costs	Governance costs £	2016 £	2015 £
Audit fees	2,793	2,793	2,376
Accountancy	9,924	9,924	8,873
Legal and professional	-	-	61
Trustees' insurance	268	268	268
Trustees' travelling expenses	733	733	1,071
Trustee meetings	953	953	-
Filing fees	48	48	-
	<u>14,719</u>	<u>14,719</u>	<u>12,649</u>
Analysed between Charitable activities	<u>14,719</u>	<u>14,719</u>	<u>12,649</u>

8 Trustees

None of the Trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration during the year, but they were reimbursed a total of £539 (2015: £547) travelling expenses.

9 Employees

Number of employees

The average monthly number employees during the year was:

	2016 Number	2015 Number
Administration	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>
Employment costs	£	£
Wages and salaries	<u>408,043</u>	<u>374,468</u>

In addition to the permanent staff, the charity has paid an intern during most months of the year.

The number of employees whose annual remuneration was £60,000 or more were:

	2016 Number	2015 Number
£60,000-£75,000	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016

10 Tangible fixed assets	Fixtures, fittings & equipment £	
Cost		
At 1 April 2015		11,945
Additions		1,015
		<u>12,960</u>
At 31 March 2016		<u>12,960</u>
Depreciation and impairment		
At 1 April 2015		7,598
Depreciation charged in the year		2,555
		<u>10,153</u>
At 31 March 2016		<u>10,153</u>
Carrying amount		
At 31 March 2016		<u>2,807</u>
At 31 March 2015		<u>4,347</u>
11 Financial instruments	2016	2015
	£	£
Carrying amount of financial assets		
Debt instruments measured at amortised cost	2,506	2,291
	<u>2,506</u>	<u>2,291</u>
Carrying amount of financial liabilities		
Measured at amortised cost	19,775	6,551
	<u>19,775</u>	<u>6,551</u>
12 Debtors	2016	2015
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Other debtors	2,506	2,291
Prepayments and accrued income	-	5,000
	<u>2,506</u>	<u>7,291</u>
	<u>2,506</u>	<u>7,291</u>

SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016

13 Cash generated from operations	2016	2015
	£	£
Surplus for the year	55,378	12,146
Adjustments for:		
Investment income recognised in profit or loss	(1,755)	(1,652)
Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets	2,555	2,986
Movements in working capital:		
Decrease in debtors	4,785	15,994
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	13,224	(6,615)
Cash generated from operations	<u>74,187</u>	<u>22,859</u>