

Company number: 07560997

Charity Number: 1140827

# Science Media Centre

Report and financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

# Science Media Centre

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### For the year ended 31 March 2022

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## Science Media Centre

### Reference and administrative information

For the year ended 31 March 2022

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**Company number** 07560997  
**Country of incorporation** United Kingdom

**Charity number** 1140827  
**Country of registration** England & Wales

**Registered office and operational address** 215 Euston Road  
London  
NW1 2BE

**Trustees** Trustees, who are also directors under company law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:

Jonathan Baker	Chair
Karen Chadwick	Treasurer
Dr Paul Brooker	
Adrian Bull MBE	Resigned 14 Oct 2021
John Davidson	
Prof Ann Jacqueline Hunter	Resigned 3 Feb 2022
Prof Kevin McConway	
Gavin Allen	Resigned 24 Nov 2021
Jonathan Brüün	
Alex Keenlyside	
Alice Henschley	Appointed 14 Oct 2021
Nick Hillier	Appointed 14 Oct 2021
Joanne Manning	Appointed 14 Oct 2021

<b>Key management personnel</b>	Fiona Fox OBE	Chief Executive
	Tom Sheldon	Senior Press Manager
	Selina Kermodé	Head of Operations

## Science Media Centre

### Reference and administrative information

For the year ended 31 March 2022

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<b>Bankers</b>	HSBC Bank PLC 16 King Street Covent Garden London WC2E 8JF
	CCLA Senator House 85 Queen Victoria Street London EC4V 4ET
<b>Solicitors</b>	Bristows LLP 100 Victoria Embankment London EC4Y 0DH
<b>Independent examiner</b>	Fleur Holden Sayer Vincent LLP Chartered Accountants Invicta House 108-114 Golden Lane LONDON EC1Y 0TL

The trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the memorandum and articles of association, the requirements of a directors' report as required under company law, and the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities: SORP applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102.

## Objectives and activities

The trustees review the aims, objectives and activities of the charity each year. This report looks at what the charity has achieved and the outcomes of its work in the reporting period. The trustees report the success of each key activity and the benefits the charity has brought to those groups of people that it is set up to help. The review also helps the trustees ensure the charity's aims, objectives and activities remained focused on its stated purposes.

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

## Introduction

The Science Media Centre (SMC) has its roots in the influential House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee's 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 measured 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 2022 is the SMC's eleventh year as a fully independent organisation, but also its twentieth year of existence.

Public opinion surveys demonstrate that the public values science, with 82% saying they are very or fairly interested in health research<sup>1</sup>, while other surveys report that the vast majority (74%) agree that science will make people's lives easier, and think that scientists (89%) and engineers (87%) make a valuable contribution to society<sup>2</sup>. A large majority (82%) of people report being very or

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<sup>1</sup> Wellcome Trust Monitor Report Wave 4 November 2019, Public interest and engagement with health research

<sup>2</sup> Public Attitudes to Science 2019, carried out by Kantar, on behalf of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

fairly interested in hearing directly from scientists about their research – an increase from 63% in 2015<sup>3</sup>.

The most recent survey of its kind reported high levels of public trust that scientists (82%), engineers (83%), and doctors (91%) tell the truth<sup>4</sup>. Mainstream media such as television and newspapers (online) continue to be some of the most common and significant sources of science news that people access<sup>5</sup>, 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.

## Purposes and aims

The SMC's philosophy is:

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

Our main activities allow us to achieve our philosophy and our objectives – 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

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<sup>3</sup> Wellcome Monitor 2020, How the British public engage with health research

<sup>4</sup> Veracity Index 2021, Ipsos MORI survey of trust in professions

<sup>5</sup> Reuters institute Digital News Report 2021

our long and short-term aims are very similar. For us, the most important thing is that we continue to be able to proactively 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 four members of staff providing essential support to the running of the Centre.

### Volunteers

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.

Scientists might help with an article for the Daily Mail on a controversial science subject, give an interview for Sky News on a breaking news story, or speak to a journalist at The Mirror about a planned exclusive article in their area of expertise. They speak on panels at our press briefings and send written comments in response to breaking stories and in advance of the publication of new research helping journalists to assess the significance of these new stories and papers. Scientists and journalists also willingly give up their time to speak at our Introduction to the News Media Events.

Many of these requests to scientists are made at short notice and outside normal working hours. Without their contributions, the SMC would not exist.

The Trustees wish to record their sincere thanks to all those who gave up their time to help the SMC achieve its charitable objectives and improve media coverage of science stories.

### Public benefit statement

The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning its future activities. In particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives that have been set.

### Achievements and performance

The charity's main activities and those it tries to help are described below. All its activities focus on communicating science to the public and are undertaken to further the Science Media Centre's charitable purposes for the public benefit.

## Summary

The Science Media Centre exists to respond to complex and often controversial stories in the national news media. When a science story breaks, or new research is published, the SMC encourages appropriate experts to engage with the media to ensure that the 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, environment, and engineering. For a second year, the COVID-19 pandemic was a key focus of our work. This meant providing journalists with regular access to the best experts on topics such as variants, vaccines, treatments, and modelling, helping to ensure that this scientific evidence and expertise was central to media reporting, and that the public had access to accurate information. Beyond COVID we have continued to work across ongoing developments in research on climate and biodiversity, mental health, dementia, nutrition, pollution, and fertility.

This year we ran 149 press briefings (106 of those on COVID-19) which is **nearly double the number of briefings** we'd run in an average (non-pandemic) year. We sent out 782 roundups and rapid reactions (560 of those on COVID-19) of expert commentary, which is nearly **3 times the number** sent out in an average year.

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

Support of scientists is one of the most valued aspects of the SMC's work, and by working with individuals and press officers we encourage them to engage with and help inform the media coverage of their area of expertise.

The SMC has continued to support RNA Media (two former science and health journalists now working as media trainers) in running 'Impact: Women scientists in the media' communications workshops. They have been funded by the NIHR. The SMC was responsible for recruiting the participants, who attend these sessions for free. The SMC also gave a talk at each of these sessions and recruited these experts to the database afterwards. There have been 12 sessions, training 44 researchers from 24 different institutions. Feedback from the Impact session attendees was very positive and many have gone on to engage with the media when their particular area of expertise hits the headlines.

The SMC worked with the journal *Nature* on a survey of scientists who had taken part in media work during the pandemic, where it was reported that harassment as a result of media engagement was common. This survey led to the SMC running an event in February 2022 on the issue of the harassment of scientists. While this event was not designed to provide any easy answers to this issue, it was an opportunity for researchers to hear about the experiences of the panellists and other attendees, along with providing some practical advice for scientists and their press officers of how best to respond to harassment. We had a turnout of 177 attendees with people dialling in from 8 different countries.



On a more informal level, the SMC provides direct day-to-day support to scientists who want help getting their work into the media, with the SMC press officers frequently advising academics on press matters even when they don't fall directly into our core work. We also help scientists achieve recognition and acknowledgement from their peers and institutions for the work they do to improve public understanding of science, particularly on the most challenging topics. This ranges from writing citations and supporting nominations to providing personal recommendations when appropriate.

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

The main services that the SMC provides to journalists are:

### *Rapid Reactions*

When a science or science-related story hits the headlines, the SMC encourages leading scientists in relevant fields to engage rapidly with the story, and offer evidence-based expert comments. The SMC then makes these experts and their comments available to journalists at all major UK news outlets. The media can follow up with further queries or interview requests. This activity helps to inject accurate information and valuable context from experts into the reporting of rapidly-developing news stories, which in turn reduces the likelihood of inaccurate speculation which may mislead or alarm the public. Rapid Reactions therefore satisfy both the desire of journalists for credible experts and appropriate information, and the public's need to hear from the best experts at the time when it is most critical.

Rapid Reactions have once again played a vital role in the media reporting of the COVID-19 pandemic. This may have been through experts assessing the scientific evidence base and providing context when new government policies are announced on the introduction or removal of restrictions, on updates on the licencing of new vaccines or the plans for vaccination roll out, or the COVID-19 deaths statistics.

Beyond COVID-19, this work has included gathering comments from scientists in responding to stories such as the new WHO air quality guidelines, changes to the UK legal time limit on egg freezing, a case of bird flu in a person in the UK, news of a pig heart transplanted into a human, or the loss of power to Chernobyl during the war in Ukraine.

### *Roundups*

This service is unique to the SMC and is a key tool for the Centre and for specialist science, health and environment journalists to ensure accurate coverage of new scientific research. The SMC gathers and issues written comments from leading, relevant experts on embargoed science studies and reports ahead of their publication. These third party comments offer a critique and

valuable insights that science journalists can use to cover the story 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 for policy, patients or the public. Print and broadcast journalists can lift quotes for their reports and follow up for further interviews with the experts.

For example, it may involve gathering independent expert comments on observational studies where it is important that the limitations and caveats of the work be properly understood by the public, such as roundups this year on drinking coffee and dementia, eating dairy and cancer risk, or meat consumption and all-cause mortality. It could also involve responding to studies on commonly taken medications, where inaccurate reporting could lead to people being misinformed of the benefits and risks of these drugs. A roundup may also be done in response to a study where it's important to recognise the limits of real world implications when carried out in cells or animal models, and expert commentary can help achieve this.

On COVID, we collated third party expert commentary on studies on new variants and their characteristics, how well the vaccines protect against infection, hospitalisation and death, modelling studies on the role and impact of non-pharmaceutical interventions and vaccination on infections, papers on the prevalence and symptom profile of long covid, and testing protocols.

We have continued to do roundups on preprints as well, where third party comments could be regarded as even more critical as these studies have not yet been through any external review by other scientists, and therefore roundups provide the first instance of independent expert scrutiny.

### *Briefings*

The SMC runs regular press briefings for specialist science journalists at the UK national news outlets. These briefings provide an opportunity for scientists and journalists to meet regularly, and allow scientists to explain their complicated work in a detailed and measured way. This gives journalists the opportunity to get fully to grips with a difficult or significant area of science, with the end result being more accurate media coverage. News briefings allow scientists to explain new findings in a more nuanced way, while 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 many high-profile and ongoing scientific issues.

During the pandemic press briefings moved online and are now hybrid, with a combined overall increase in attendees.

On COVID-19, we ran press briefings on new results on treatments, the epidemiology of the pandemic in the UK, modelling of the roadmap out of lockdown, health disparities, the neurological and mental health problems in those recovering from the disease, the risk of severe

disease in children, and the prevalence and symptoms of long covid. We have also hosted the launch of the human challenge trial to study immune responses in those previously infected and the launch and results of the events research programme.

As the vaccine roll out continued we ran briefings on the real world data as it accumulated, including on how the vaccines protected against severe disease, hospitalisation and death, how they dealt with new variants of concern, the detailed immunological responses to primary and booster vaccination, and the evidence around vaccinating children. When there were initial concerns that the AstraZeneca vaccine could be linked to rare but serious blood clots, we ran Q&A briefings with key experts in the area to help explain how the evidence to find a causal link would be collected and examined, and when further evidence was available, the authors of new papers presented their findings to the journalists.

On environmental issues, we ran press briefings on; the IPCC Sixth Assessment reports from Working Groups 1 and 2, the Global Carbon Budget, the IPBES report on biodiversity and climate change, nature based solutions for climate change which could be done in the UK, a study on melting land ice and sea level rises, and background briefings on nitrogen air pollution and the role trees can play in tackling climate change.

On the regulation of science, we hosted briefings on genetically altered food and the use of stem cells in research.

We ran briefings on depression and inflammation, psilocybin as a treatment for depression, the long term use of antidepressants, and social media use in adolescence and wellbeing.

We also hosted the results of a large ovarian cancer screening trial and the work of Genomics England's 100,000 Genomes pilot on diagnosing rare disease.

#### *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 COVID-19 Vaccine Media Hub is a collaborative project between the Global SMC Network, the fact checking organisation Meedan, and other SMC like or developing SMC organisations. Funding for the project has come from the Google News Initiative (GNI). The aim of the project is to increase access for global factcheckers and journalists to the best evidence on COVID-19 vaccines, including the translation of materials into regional and local dialects that are often under represented. The UK SMC has contributed heavily to the content of the site and has also helped in the planning and direction of the project. <https://covidvaccinehub.org/>

## 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 experts on an issue in the headlines, or when their own institution or scientists are the subject of media interest. Press officers regularly approach the SMC for its guidance and expertise on media stories, particularly when an issue is complex and controversial. This can include advice on drafting accurate and responsible press releases, how best to do responsible press work on preprints, or whether to run a press briefing on a new piece of research.

The SMC also recognises and champions the crucial role press officers play in responsible science communication. SMC staff are often invited to give talks and presentations at scientific organisations and meetings, both aiding the press officers and encouraging their scientists to engage with the media, whilst also raising awareness of the SMC's work.

## 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. Aside from Fiona Fox's blog hosted on the SMC website which features three new blogposts, in the last year SMC staff have been featured in articles and comment pieces published in Press Gazette, PR week, The Sun, Research Fortnight, The Observer, BBC, The Guardian, Politico, Medscape, Nature and Times Higher Education. Fiona Fox has also spoken at; an event at the Jameel Institute at Imperial College London on the role of data analytics during COVID, on Matt Chorley's Red Box Politics Podcast about scientists and the media during the pandemic, at the BBSRC Annual Strategic Workshop panel – "The Age of Bioscience", at the HDRUK National Core Studies panel – "UK COVID Science – the perspective of the public, the media and the NHS", at the Frankfurt Book Fair panel – "How has Covid-19 changed the way we communicate science?", and chaired a panel discussion at the Progress Education Trust Conference on "New Frontiers: Futureproofing Fertility and Embryo Law".

Staff have also spoken to the journalism school at Cardiff University, IPSO, The British Science Association, the British Embassy in Rome, the British Embassy in Prague, and at a joint panel held by the Royal Society and Imperial College London on Science Communication to Policymakers, speaking about our work.

SMC staff members additionally engage and share their expertise with the wider scientific community through their roles on boards and advisory committees of other scientific organisations. Fiona Fox is on the advisory committee for the Roslin Institute and the National Institute for Health Research Health Protection Unit in Emergency Preparedness and Response. Hannah Taylor Lewis is a Stempra committee member.

## Fundraising

The year 2021–22 ended with a surplus of £30,921 (£127,95 in 2020–21). This represents a return to more normal levels of income after additional income was received in the prior year related to the Covid pandemic.

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

The Centre has high levels of retention within those organisations supporting the SMC and continues to be successful in attracting new supporters.

## Impact

The work of the SMC is often difficult to judge through numbers alone. Success can mean a poor study or unpublished conference abstract 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 or cautioned against overinterpretation of the results.

As the COVID–19 pandemic continued, it was clear how important it was that top quality scientific evidence and expertise was made readily and widely available to the public via the news media. The appetite for expert comments, broadcast interviews and press briefings remained exceptionally high and impact of the efforts of the team at the SMC – alongside the scientists and press officers they worked with – on the quality of science journalism in the UK has been strong and measurable.

During the past twelve months, we held 149 press conferences with an average attendance of 22 journalists from the national news. Together these briefings produced over 1819 pieces of coverage in the national news media. We also sent out 782 rapid reactions and round ups on breaking news stories or new scientific studies and reports – providing the public with accurate and measured scientific expertise.

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

1. Continue to work on helping journalists report the evidence and new research on COVID–19, responding with expert comment, media briefings and supporting the scientists working in these areas to speak out about their research.

We continued to run press briefings on important new research such as real world data on the effectiveness of COVID–19 vaccines, studies on the characteristics of new variants, work on the complex immunological responses of both natural infection and vaccination, the side effects from

vaccination such a rare but serious blood clotting events, modelling of different non-pharmaceutical interventions, and long COVID.

A large part of our work on COVID remained gathering expert comments on newly published research, including that disseminated via preprint server, where it was crucial that journalists had rapid access to independent experts' assessment on this rapidly published work to help gauge how robust the science was, its significance, and any real world implications.

We continued to work with RNA media in providing media training for women scientists carrying out research into COVID, to help those with little prior media experience learn practical tips on how to most effectively engage with the news media when their area of research on COVID-19 hit the headlines.

Fiona Lethbridge gave a talk about the work of the SMC during Covid and some of the SMC's recommendations on science and the media at the Royal Society Science of COVID conference; which was attended and discussed with many senior scientists who had been involved in the UK's Covid response and media work.

2. Continue to carry out media work on important non-COVID issues so that researchers working on other important and contentious scientific issues have their voices heard in the mainstream media

One key media story this year was the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), held in the UK in November 2021. In the lead up to COP26, we ran briefings on whether it is possible to meet the Paris pledges, whether the world can get to net zero, the decarbonisation of construction, the role of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean in climate change, a joint statement on COP26 from Patrick Vallance and other scientific advisors to governments around the world, a report from the Academy of Medical Sciences and Royal Society on climate change and health, and the Global Carbon Budget. This helped ensure that in the lead up to the event, science and environment journalists were well-informed of the key issues that would be discussed at the meeting and the evidence behind them. During COP26, we gathered comments on the negotiations, draft agreement and final agreement, again helping journalists navigate this important policy event and what the scientific evidence could tell us about the impact of certain policies.

We also continued to work on many of the key issues that are common to our work, including treatments for mental health, claims made around the health impacts of diet and nutrition, work on the potential mechanisms and treatment of dementia, e-cigarettes, biodiversity and cancer. This involved running press briefings on important new studies in the field, gathering third party expert comments on new research and responding to breaking news developments.

We have continued to engage with the research community about how best to communicate their research and expertise, explaining how the SMC is able to help and support them in doing so. This has included staff giving talks to researchers at the Institute of Metabolism and Systems Research,

Imperial College London, the MRC London Institute of Medical Sciences, Alzheimer's Scotland, King's College London, the Society for the Study of Addiction, the MRC Human Genetics Unit, Newcastle University, the Welsh Crucible (a development programme for leading researchers across Wales), the Engineering Professors' Council meeting, a media skills training session for academic GPs, and the British Toxicology Society.

3. Investigate future working of the SMC and press briefings once people start returning to the office and ensure our work is accessible and most useful for the journalists and scientists

The SMC has kept in close touch with the journalists throughout the pandemic to get their thoughts on the future of in person press briefings. There was a consensus that there remains an appetite for an in-person option for journalists to attend although a dial in option should always be available due to the changes in flexible working that are likely to extend beyond the pandemic. Work was carried out looking into the equipment and staffing requirements to make this possible. New equipment was purchased in order to set up hybrid press briefings from our office.

We have hosted our first hybrid briefing with journalists attending both in person and dialled in. It was a success and over the next year, more work will take place on ensuring hybrid briefings can run smoothly and work well for both the scientists and the journalists. As we run more hybrid briefings, this will guide discussions as to the best format for SMC press briefings in the future.

Work was also carried out to begin assessing how best staff can work from home, should it be necessary due to the pandemic where working from home is advised or due to staff being infectious but well enough to work. This project has led to changes in desktop set ups where all staff will now have a work laptop and laptop dock in the office. This update to staff equipment will be carried out over the next year.

4. 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Science Media Centre

In preparation for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the SMC, the team set up a list of projects that would both celebrate and reflect on the work that has been achieved so far. These projects will take up a considerable amount of staff time so planning is in place to ensure they can all be done whilst keeping up with the day to day work of the SMC. The projects will include; a series of podcasts looking back at big stories and events over the past 20 years of the SMC, the publications of Fiona Fox's book, a residential trustees away day, a piece of work on the changing role of press officers, and hosting the global network of SMC's at a meeting in the UK.

## Financial review

### Funding

The SMC is funded principally by trusts and foundations, scientific 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 we cap contributions from any one institution at 5% of the SMC's annual income. The cap for 2021–22 was £35,000. The SMC's Trustees and Advisory Committee have agreed on two exceptions to the 5% upper limit: the Wellcome Trust and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). UKRI's contribution is over the 5% cap as this represents the consolidated amounts from several Research Councils which is now paid via the umbrella organisation set up in 2019.

The SMC is open and transparent with regard to its funding. All funders are listed on the SMC website under bands for their total amount recognised within a financial year. A list is also included on page 22

## Transactions and financial position

In its eleventh year of operation as a fully independent organisation, the SMC has again continued to maintain a good financial position, having ended the year in surplus and built up an appropriate level of reserves by year end.

The Statement of Financial Activities shows that the total income for the year was £682,047 (£722,170 in 2020–21).

Total expenditure for the year was £661,360 (£595,209 in 2020–21) of which 96% (96% in 2020–21) was spent on charitable activities directly carrying out the Charity's key objectives.

The activities for the year therefore resulted in a surplus of £30,921 (£127,955 in 2020–21). This includes £10,234 (£994 in 2021–21) gains on investments.

## Investment policy

During this period the SMC placed an additional £100,000 into an investment fund. It is the intention of the Trustees to keep 12 months' running costs as cash in saving accounts, with lower risk and quicker access. Funds in excess of this are to be invested for the furtherance of the Charity's aims.

## Principal risks and uncertainties

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 responsibility delegated to the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee to review the register at each meeting.

The current risk register pays particular attention to the risks around funding, a major incident closing our office, staff welfare, cybersecurity, and the loss of data.



Risks for loss of funding are mitigated by close monitoring of the finances of the SMC, by seeking new income each year and by having a number of supporting organisations from across the sector. The independence of the Centre from funders is maintained by the current 5% cap and clear communication with new and existing funders on the separation between the funding and activity of the SMC.

Best practice around conflicts of interests continues to be monitored by staff and compared with our current policy to identify any improvements that could be made. The Centre clarifies when no competing interests have been received and when there are none to declare. Any criticism received regarding a conflict is met with open discussion and passed on to the scientist in question.

Cybersecurity risks to the SMC are addressed by ensuring the sector best practice is followed. This includes, but is not limited to: firewalls, secure staff passwords, regular deletion of emails, antivirus software and regular off-site backups.

## Reserves policy and going concern

The SMC has agreed that reserves would be used for support during a short, defined period of a deficit budget, allowing for new sources of income or reductions in expenditure to be identified.

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 twelve months' expenditure (approximately £600,000 for this period).

This level of reserves has been built up and maintained throughout the period; the Charity holds £839,100 in reserves, of which £10,000 are restricted, as of 31 March 2022 (£808,179 in 2020-21). On this basis we are satisfied we are a going concern.

Our year end fund position of £839,100 is comfortably in excess of our £600,000 reserves target. The Trustees feel that in the current uncertain economic climate and period of rapid change post-pandemic it is prudent to hold a higher level of reserves.

Trustees periodically review the reserves policy of the Charity.

## Plans for the future

The current period has seen the SMC's eleventh year as a fully independent charity.

The Trustees feel that the SMC is continuing to operate 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 in the media, responding with expert comment, media briefings and supporting the scientists working in these areas to speak out about their research.

While COVID is likely to remain a significant story for the next year, there has already been noticeably more space and appetite for other science, health and environment stories in the media. We will continue to monitor the news for developing stories and issues where scientific expertise can help play a role in accurate reporting.

We will work closely with scientists who are providing third party comments on roundups and speaking at press briefings about new published research to help ensure new research is reported on in an accurate and measured way.

We will continue to recruit the best experts on topics which regularly make the news by going and giving talks at universities and institutions, working with press officers and will run at least one Introduction to the News Media Event.

2. Work on a piece of work evaluating the changing role of press officers in universities

The SMC will work with Helen Jamison and Claire Bithell, along with members of our advisory committee and trustees to set up an evaluation of the state of research communications and the aims and objectives of communications teams within universities. This work will involve a survey of Stempra members, workshops with scientists (organised by Ipsos), and interviewing communication professionals at universities around the country. This report will help guide discussions as to the future direction of the work of the SMC, as well as provide a useful resource for communications professionals across universities. Once published, the report will be rolled out through a series of round tables in collaboration with Research England and Universities UK.

The SMC will work on promoting and discussing the outcomes and recommendations from this report, engaging with key organisations and individuals in the university sector.

3. Organise and host a meeting for the global SMC's network

The UK SMC will host the global networks of SMC's in September 2022. This will be an opportunity to discuss key issues that impact the work of all SMC's, such as the role of preprints in dissemination and communication of research, a discussion on the media coverage of the pandemic in each of the countries represented, and describing the key functions of what makes a Science Media Centre.

We are also looking to work more closely with the international centres in the future, with a new role funded by Springer Nature in development that will help orchestrate greater collaboration, either on day to day media work or distinct projects.

#### 4. 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Science Media Centre

2022 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the SMC and a range of projects have been planned or are already in place to commemorate and reflect on this work. There will be a strategy away day for all staff and trustees to discuss the future of the SMC. This will include reflecting on findings from the 'changing role of science press officers' work, and form part of a governance review.

The team will work on a series of podcasts which look back on the biggest stories in the SMC's history, speaking with key scientists, press officers and journalists involved.

Fiona Fox's book will be published in April 2022. Promotion of the book will be used to prompt discussion on its key themes.

#### 5. Write up and roll out SMC's lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and submit to relevant enquiries

Having been one of the busiest science press offices throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the SMC is in a key position to help assess what went well and what could be improved in communication of scientific research to the public in emergencies, such as during pandemics. From discussions within the team, along with getting feedback from scientists and journalists we have worked with closely, the SMC will create a summary of lessons learned which can help guide media work in the future. This work will be fed into the public enquiry as required.

## 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 are updated annually, whilst 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. 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 nine

## Science Media Centre

### Trustees' annual report

#### For the year ended 31 March 2022

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additional staff, the Advisory Committee and Trustees as appropriate, undertakes the necessary work.

A Senior Management Team comprising of the Chief Executive, the Senior Press Manager and Head of Operations allows for better distribution of organisational responsibility and both staff and Trustees continue to be happy with the structure.

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 Finance, Audit & 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, two Trustees and two external members, with the Treasurer and members of senior management in an observational capacity. The Committee meets three times a year.

The Remuneration Committee meets once a year. 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:

Jonathan Baker	Chair
Karen Chadwick	Treasurer
Dr Paul Brooker	
Adrian Bull MBE	Resigned 14 Oct 2021
John Davidson	
Prof Ann Jacqueline Hunter	Resigned 3 Feb 2022
Prof Kevin McConway	
Gavin Allen	Resigned 24 Nov 2021
Jonathan Brüün	
Alex Keenlyside	
Alice Henschley	Appointed 14 Oct 2021
Nick Hillier	Appointed 14 Oct 2021
Joanne Manning	Appointed 14 Oct 2021

#### Staff

Trustees delegate day-to-day responsibility to the Key Management Personnel:

Fiona Fox OBE	Chief Executive
Tom Sheldon	Senior Press Manager
Selina Kermode	Head of Operations

The SMC has nine established 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.

During the year the SMC also benefited greatly from eleven interns who each spent a month assisting with administrative duties and experiencing life within a busy press office.

Trustees would also like to record their appreciation for the efforts of the interns, and are pleased to note that many previous interns go on to obtain full time permanent roles within the science communication field.

### Pay and remuneration

The following principles of the pay system are agreed by Trustees

- The SMC should not have a system which the charity cannot afford
- The system should not reward staff who are underperforming
- The system should have some built-in mechanism to monitor the competition and react to changes in the job market
- The system should recognise the developmental nature of the roles at the SMC

All permanent staff are appointed into salary bands, dependent on the role and its responsibilities. Reflecting the developmental nature of the roles, these salary bands each have 5 or 6 'spine points'. Pay increases are recommended by managers based on performance, and are approved by the Remuneration Committee based on the evidence provided, affordability, wider economic circumstances and the financial performance of the SMC during the year. Benchmarking is conducted every two years to ensure the salary brackets are comparable to similar roles outside the SMC.

The salary of the Chief Executive is considered separately by the Remuneration Committee who will consider the wider economic circumstances and any benchmarking before making recommendations to the Trustees.

Benefits currently provided to staff currently include a newspaper subscription, income protection insurance, gym membership and membership of Stempra.

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 11 March 2011 and registered as a charity on 18 March 2021.

The company was established under a memorandum of association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its articles of association.

All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 7 to the accounts.

## Appointment of trustees

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.

## Trustee induction and training

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.

## Related parties and relationships with other organisations

Related party transactions are detailed in Note 9 in the financial statements.

## Statement of responsibilities of the trustees

The trustees (who are also directors of Science Media Centre for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, 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 and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements

Trustees' annual report

For the year ended 31 March 2022

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- Prepare the financial statements 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 charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the charity guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £10 to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 March 2022 was 10 (2021:10). The trustees are members of the charity but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

The trustees' annual report has been approved by the trustees on 20 October 2022 and signed on their behalf by

Jonathan Baker  
Chair of Trustee

Funders list

April 2021 – 31 March 2022

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**£2,000 AND UNDER**

Personal donation from one individual

Association for Clinical Biochemistry & Laboratory Medicine

Association of Medical Research Charities

British Ecological Society

Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers

Cochrane Collaboration

Cystic Fibrosis Trust

ESHRE

Health Data Research UK (HDRUK)

Institute of Physics & Engineering in Medicine

John Innes Centre

Keele University

Lancaster University

National Oceanography Centre

Nuclear Industry Association

Quadram Institute Bioscience

Sainsbury Laboratory

University of Exeter

University of Portsmouth

University of Reading

University of Warwick

University of York

**£2,001 – £4,999**

Alzheimer's Research UK

BASF

Biochemical Society

Biogen Ltd

British Pharmacological Society

British Society of Immunology

Covestro UK Limited

FoodDrinkEurope

Francis Crick Institute

Genomics England

Institute of Cancer Research

Johnson & Johnson Ltd

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

Met Office

Microbiology Society

National Nuclear Laboratory

Newcastle University

Physiological Society



Funders list

April 2021 – 31 March 2022

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Procter & Gamble UK  
Queen Mary, University of London  
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health  
Royal Society  
Royal Society of Biology  
Society for Endocrinology  
Society for Radiological Protection  
Taylor & Francis  
UK Dementia Research Institute  
United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority  
University of East Anglia  
University of Leeds  
University of Manchester  
University of Nottingham

**£5,000 – £9,999**

Abbvie Ltd  
Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry  
BioIndustry Association  
BP International  
British Heart Foundation  
Cancer Research UK  
Chemical Industries Association  
Durham University  
GE Healthcare  
Institution of Engineering and Technology (The IET)  
John Wiley & Sons  
King's College London  
LifeArc  
Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)  
National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)  
National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)  
Nestle UK Ltd  
News UK Ltd  
Nutrition Society  
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust  
Rolls-Royce Plc  
Royal Academy of Engineering  
Royal College of Psychiatrists  
Sellafield Sites  
Society for Applied Microbiology  
UK Centre of Ecology & Hydrology  
University College London

## Science Media Centre

### Funders list

April 2021 – 31 March 2022

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University of Cambridge  
University of Edinburgh

#### **£10,000 – £19,999**

Bristows LLP – *pro bono support*  
DeepMind Technologies Limited  
Diageo Plc  
Elsevier  
Financial Times  
Food Standards Agency  
Imperial College London  
Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD)  
Roche Products Ltd  
Sanofi Aventis  
Springer Nature Ltd  
Academy of Medical Sciences  
University of Oxford

#### **£20,000 – £30,000**

Grant from Global SMC Initiative (wholly-owned subsidiary of AusSMC) for [COVID-19 Vaccine Media Hub](#) project  
AstraZeneca  
GlaxoSmithKline  
Gatsby Charitable Foundation

#### **OVER £30,000**

UK Research & Innovation  
Wellcome Trust

## Independent examiner's report

To the trustees of

Science Media Centre

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I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Science Media Centre for the year ended 31 March 2022.

This report is made solely to the trustees as a body, in accordance with the Charities Act 2011. My examination has been undertaken so that I might state to the trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the trustees as a body, for my examination, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

### Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Company you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act')/ Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the Company's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act').

### Independent examiner's statement

Since the Company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accounts in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- 2 The accounts do not accord with those records; or
- 3 The accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 The accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities.

## **Independent examiner's report**

**To the trustees of**

**Science Media Centre**

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I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Name: Fleur Holden FCA

Address: Sayer Vincent LLP, Invicta House, 108-114 Golden Lane, London, EC1Y 0TL

Date: 11 November 2022

Science Media Centre

Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

		2022			2021		
	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £
<b>Income from:</b>							
Donations	2	643,308	-	<b>643,308</b>	708,567	-	708,567
Charitable activities	3	-	38,657	<b>38,657</b>	-	13,184	13,184
Investments	4	82	-	<b>82</b>	419	-	419
<b>Total income</b>		<b>643,390</b>	<b>38,657</b>	<b>682,047</b>	<b>708,986</b>	<b>13,184</b>	<b>722,170</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>							
Raising funds	5	42,558	-	<b>42,558</b>	29,627	-	29,627
Charitable activities	5	590,145	28,657	<b>618,802</b>	552,398	13,184	565,582
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>632,703</b>	<b>28,657</b>	<b>661,360</b>	<b>582,025</b>	<b>13,184</b>	<b>595,209</b>
<b>Net income before net gains on investments</b>		<b>10,687</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>20,687</b>	<b>126,961</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>126,961</b>
Net gains on investments		<b>10,234</b>	-	<b>10,234</b>	994	-	994
<b>Net income for the year</b>	6	<b>20,921</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>30,921</b>	<b>127,955</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>127,955</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>							
Total funds brought forward		808,179	-	<b>808,179</b>	680,224	-	680,224
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>829,100</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>839,100</b>	<b>808,179</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>808,179</b>

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in Note 16a to the financial statements.

Science Media Centre

Balance sheet

Company no. 07560997

As at 31 March 2022

	Note	£	2022 £	£	2021 £
<b>Fixed assets:</b>					
Investments	11		171,452		61,218
			<u>171,452</u>		<u>61,218</u>
<b>Current assets:</b>					
Debtors	12	69,359		81,340	
Cash at bank and in hand		666,423		717,927	
		<u>735,782</u>		<u>799,267</u>	
<b>Liabilities:</b>					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	(68,134)		(52,306)	
				<u>667,648</u>	<u>746,961</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>					
			<u>839,100</u>		<u>808,179</u>
<b>Total net assets</b>			<u>839,100</u>		<u>808,179</u>
<b>The funds of the charity:</b>	16a				
Restricted income funds			10,000		-
Unrestricted income funds:					
General funds		829,100		808,179	
		<u>829,100</u>		<u>808,179</u>	
Total unrestricted funds			<u>829,100</u>		<u>808,179</u>
<b>Total charity funds</b>			<u>839,100</u>		<u>808,179</u>

The opinion of the directors is that the company is entitled to the exemptions conferred by Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The directors acknowledge the following responsibilities:

- (i) The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476
- (ii) The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts

Approved by the trustees on 20 October 2022 and signed on their behalf by

Jonathan Baker  
Chair of Trustees

## Science Media Centre

### Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 March 2022

	2022		2021	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>				
Net income for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	30,921		127,955	
Depreciation charges	-		267	
(Gains) on investments	(10,234)		(994)	
Interest from investments	(82)		(419)	
Loss on the disposal of fixed assets	-		575	
Decrease/(Increase) in debtors	11,981		(35,215)	
Increase in creditors	15,828		20,793	
		<hr/>		<hr/>
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>		<b>48,414</b>		<b>112,962</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities:</b>				
Interest from investments	82		419	
Purchase of investments	(100,000)		(60,224)	
		<hr/>		<hr/>
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>		<b>(99,918)</b>		<b>(59,805)</b>
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>		<b>(51,504)</b>		<b>53,157</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		717,927		664,770
		<hr/>		<hr/>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>		<b>666,423</b>		<b>717,927</b>
		<hr/> <hr/>		<hr/> <hr/>

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

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**1 Accounting policies**

**a) Statutory information**

Science Media Centre is a charitable company limited by guarantee and is incorporated in England and Wales.

The registered office address, which is also the operational address, is 215 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BE.

**b) Basis of preparation**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with 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) – (Charities SORP FRS 102), The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy or note.

In applying the financial reporting framework, the trustees have made a number of subjective judgements, for example in respect of significant accounting estimates. Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The nature of the estimation means the actual outcomes could differ from those estimates. Any significant estimates and judgements affecting these financial statements are detailed within the relevant accounting policy below.

**c) Public benefit entity**

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

The trustees do not consider that there are any sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

**d) Going concern**

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern. The year end funds position is £839,100 which is in excess of our reserves target.

**e) Income**

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and that the amount can be measured reliably.

Donations are recognised once the Charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount.

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

Income received in advance of the provision of a specified service is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

**f) Fund accounting**

Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund.

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources received or generated for the charitable purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

**g) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT**

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds relate to the costs incurred by the charity in inducing third parties to make voluntary contributions to it, as well as the cost of any activities with a fundraising purpose
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of delivering services undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

**h) Listed investments**

Investments are a form of basic financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction value and subsequently measured at their fair value as at the balance sheet date using the closing quoted market price. Any change in fair value will be recognised in the statement of financial activities. Investment gains and losses, whether realised or unrealised, are combined and shown in the heading "Net gains/(losses) on investments" in the statement of financial activities. The charity does not acquire put options, derivatives or other complex financial instruments.



## Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

## 1 Accounting policies (continued)

## i) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

## j) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

## k) Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

## l) Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

## 2 Income from donations

	£	2022 Total £	£	2021 Total £
Donations and gifts	408,308	<b>408,308</b>	471,117	471,117
Grants receivable for core activities	75,000	<b>75,000</b>	70,000	70,000
<b>Government grants:</b>				
UK Research & Innovation	95,000	<b>95,000</b>	95,000	95,000
Food Standards Agency	10,000	<b>10,000</b>	10,000	10,000
National Institute for Clinical Excellence	5,000	<b>5,000</b>	5,000	5,000
National Institute for Health Research	9,000	<b>9,000</b>	15,000	15,000
Sellafield Sites	5,000	<b>5,000</b>	5,000	5,000
Genomics England	4,000	<b>4,000</b>	4,000	4,000
Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory	5,000	<b>5,000</b>	5,000	5,000
National Nuclear Laboratory	2,500	<b>2,500</b>	2,500	2,500
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust	7,500	<b>7,500</b>	4,950	4,950
Department for Health and Social Care	-	-	10,000	10,000
Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board	-	-	3,000	3,000
United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority	4,000	<b>4,000</b>	-	-
Met Office	3,000	<b>3,000</b>	3,000	3,000
Donated services	10,000	<b>10,000</b>	5,000	5,000
	<b>643,308</b>	<b>643,308</b>	<b>708,567</b>	<b>708,567</b>

All income from donations is unrestricted.

## 3 Income from charitable activities

	£	2022 Total £	£	2021 Total £
COVID-19 Vaccine Media Hub	28,657	<b>28,657</b>	3,184	3,184
National Institute for Health Research	-	-	10,000	10,000
Changing roles of science press officers – market research	10,000	<b>10,000</b>	-	-
Total income from charitable activities	<b>38,657</b>	<b>38,657</b>	<b>13,184</b>	<b>13,184</b>

All income from charitable activities is restricted.

## 4 Income from investments

	2022 £	2021 £
Interest	<b>82</b>	419
	<b>82</b>	419

All income from investments is unrestricted.

Science Media Centre

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

5a Analysis of expenditure (current year)

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Governance costs £	Support costs	2022 Total £	2021 Total £
Staff costs (Note 7)	36,580	475,764	-	-	512,344	455,590
Event costs	-	11,297	-	-	11,297	14,157
Premises costs	-	-	-	36,998	36,998	36,043
Office costs	-	-	13	38,916	38,929	46,137
Travel, meetings and subsistence	-	-	237	3,660	3,897	237
Insurance	-	-	-	10,916	10,916	7,891
Professional fees	-	18,155	10,000	-	28,155	13,744
Accountancy	-	-	1,890	12,926	14,816	17,321
Independent examiner's fee	-	-	3,780	-	3,780	3,600
Bank charges	-	-	-	228	228	222
Depreciation	-	-	-	-	-	267
	<b>36,580</b>	<b>505,216</b>	<b>15,920</b>	<b>103,644</b>	<b>661,360</b>	<b>595,209</b>
Governance costs	796	15,124	(15,920)	-	-	-
Support costs	5,182	98,462	-	(103,644)	-	-
<b>Total expenditure 2022</b>	<b>42,558</b>	<b>618,802</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>661,360</b>	
<b>Total expenditure 2021</b>	<b>29,627</b>	<b>565,582</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>		<b>595,209</b>

Science Media Centre

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

5b Analysis of expenditure (prior year)

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Governance costs £	Support costs	2021 Total £
Staff costs (Note 7)	23,791	431,799	-	-	455,590
Event costs	-	14,157	-	-	14,157
Premises costs	-	-	-	36,043	36,043
Office costs	-	-	13	46,124	46,137
Travel, meetings and subsistence	-	-	-	237	237
Insurance	-	-	428	7,463	7,891
Professional fees	-	8,744	5,000	-	13,744
Accountancy	-	-	1,800	15,521	17,321
Independent examiner's fee	-	-	3,600	-	3,600
Bank charges	-	-	-	222	222
Depreciation	-	-	-	267	267
	<u>23,791</u>	<u>454,700</u>	<u>10,841</u>	<u>105,877</u>	<u>595,209</u>
Governance costs	542	10,299	(10,841)	-	-
Support costs	5,294	100,583	-	(105,877)	-
	<u>29,627</u>	<u>565,582</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>595,209</u>
Total expenditure 2021	<u>29,627</u>	<u>565,582</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>595,209</u>
Total expenditure 2020	<u>42,522</u>	<u>502,592</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

**6 Net income for the year**

This is stated after charging:

	2022 £	2021 £
Depreciation	–	267
Independent Examiner's Fee (excluding VAT):		
Independent Examination	3,150	3,000
Other services	1,575	1,500
	<u>3,150</u>	<u>3,000</u>
	<u>1,575</u>	<u>1,500</u>

**7 Analysis of staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses, and the cost of key management personnel**

Staff costs were as follows:

	2022 £	2021 £
Salaries and wages	435,585	395,774
Social security costs	44,180	38,147
Employer's contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	32,579	21,669
	<u>512,344</u>	<u>455,590</u>

The following number of employees received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs and employer's national insurance) during the year between:

	2022 No.	2021 No.
£60,000 – £69,999	1	1
£90,000 – £99,999	–	1
£100,000–£109,999	1	–
	<u>1</u>	<u>–</u>

The total employee benefits (including pension contributions and employer's national insurance) of the key management personnel were £255,217 (2021: £233,371).

The charity trustees were neither paid nor received any other benefits from employment with the charity in the year (2021: £nil). No charity trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2021: £nil).

Trustees' expenses represents the payment or reimbursement of travel and subsistence costs totalling £237 (2021: £nil) incurred by 2 (2021: 0) members relating to attendance at meetings of the trustees.

**8 Staff numbers**

The average number of employees (head count based on number of staff employed) during the year was 10

**9 Related party transactions**

Science Media Centre received pro bono solicitors advice from Bristows LLP with a value of £10,000 in 2021/22 (2020/21: £5,000). Alex Keenlyside is a trustee of Science Media Centre and a partner at Bristows LLP.

**10 Taxation**

The charity is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

**11 Listed investments**

	2022 £	2021 £
Fair value at the start of the year	61,218	–
Additions at cost	100,000	60,224
Net gain on change in fair value	10,234	994
	<u>171,452</u>	<u>61,218</u>

Investments comprise:

	2022 £	2021 £
UK Common investment funds	171,452	61,218
	<u>171,452</u>	<u>61,218</u>

**12 Debtors**

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade debtors	52,501	79,201
Other debtors	4,894	1,239
Prepayments	11,964	900
	<u>69,359</u>	<u>81,340</u>

**13 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year**

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade creditors	15,791	18,249
Taxation and social security	19,030	–
Accruals	33,313	5,400
Deferred income (note 14)	–	28,657
	<u>68,134</u>	<u>52,306</u>

## 14 Deferred income

Deferred income comprises a grant for the COVID-19 Vaccine Media Hub Project related to future periods.

	2022 £	2021 £
Balance at the beginning of the year	28,657	–
Amount released to income in the year	(28,657)	–
Amount deferred in the year	–	28,657
Balance at the end of the year	–	28,657

## 15a Analysis of net assets between funds (current year)

	General unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total funds £
Investments	171,452	–	171,452
Net current assets	657,648	10,000	667,648
<b>Net assets at 31 March 2022</b>	<b>829,100</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>839,100</b>

## 15b Analysis of net assets between funds (prior year)

	General unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total funds £
Tangible fixed assets	61,218	–	61,218
Net current assets	746,961	–	746,961
<b>Net assets at 31 March 2021</b>	<b>808,179</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>808,179</b>

## 16a Movements in funds (current year)

	At 1 April 2021 £	Income & gains £	Expenditure & losses £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2022 £
<b>Restricted funds:</b>					
COVID-19 Vaccine Media Hub	–	28,657	(28,657)	–	–
Changing roles of science press officers – market research	–	10,000	–	–	10,000
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>38,657</b>	<b>(28,657)</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>10,000</b>
<b>Unrestricted funds:</b>					
<b>General funds</b>	808,179	643,624	(622,703)	–	829,100
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>808,179</b>	<b>643,624</b>	<b>(622,703)</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>829,100</b>
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>808,179</b>	<b>682,281</b>	<b>(651,360)</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>839,100</b>

The narrative to explain the purpose of each fund is given at the foot of the note below.

## 16b Movements in funds (prior year)

	At 1 April 2020 £	Income & gains £	Expenditure & losses £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2021 £
<b>Restricted funds:</b>					
Impact: Women Scientists in the Media	-	10,000	(10,000)	-	-
COVID-19 Vaccine Media Hub	-	3,184	(3,184)	-	-
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	-	13,184	(13,184)	-	-
<b>Unrestricted funds:</b>					
<b>General funds</b>	680,224	709,980	(582,025)	-	<b>808,179</b>
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	680,224	709,980	(582,025)	-	<b>808,179</b>
<b>Total funds</b>	680,224	723,164	(595,209)	-	<b>808,179</b>

**Purposes of restricted funds****Impact: Women Scientists in the Media**

To provide media training to female STEM experts, a group which is historically underrepresented in the media.

**COVID-19 Vaccine Media Hub**

To contribute to a global web resource providing information for journalists and fact-checkers worldwide on COVID-19 vaccines and other relevant matters.

**Changing roles of Science Press Officers–Market Research**

To carry out focus groups with scientists on their media experience as part of the Changing Roles of Science Press Officers project.

## 17 Legal status of the charity

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. The liability of each member in the event of winding up is limited to £10.