

Company number: 07560997

Charity Number: 1140827

Science Media Centre

Report and financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2021

Science Media Centre

Contents

For the year ended 31 March 2021

Reference and administrative information	1
Trustees' annual report	3
Funders list	22
Independent examiner's report	25
Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)	27
Balance sheet	28
Statement of cash flows	29
Notes to the financial statements	30

Science Media Centre

Reference and administrative information

For the year ended 31 March 2021

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
Selina Kermode	Resigned 1 Sep 2020
Julian Hitchcock	Resigned 8 Oct 2020
Jo Revill	Resigned 8 Oct 2020
Francesca Unsworth	Resigned 8 Oct 2020
Dr Paul Brooker	
Adrian Bull MBE	
John Davidson	
Prof Ann Jacqueline Hunter	
Prof Kevin McConway	
Gavin Allen	Appointed 8 Oct 2020
Jonathan Brüün	Appointed 8 Oct 2020
Alex Keenlyside	Appointed 8 Oct 2020

Key management personnel	Fiona Fox OBE	Chief Executive
	Tom Sheldon	Senior Press Manager
	Lara Muth	Operations Manager, until 31 Aug 2020
	Selina Kermode	Head of Operations, from 1 Sep 2020

Science Media Centre

Reference and administrative information

For the year ended 31 March 2021

Bankers	HSBC Bank PLC 16 King Street Covent Garden London WC2E 8JF
	CCLA Senator House 85 Queen Victoria Street London EC4V 4ET
Solicitors	Bristows LLP 100 Victoria Embankment London EC4Y 0DH
Independent examiner	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 2021.

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 2021 is the SMC's tenth year as a fully independent organisation, but also its nineteenth year of existence.

Public opinion surveys continue to demonstrate the public values science, with 82% saying they are very or fairly interested in health research^[1], 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^[2]. The most recent survey of its kind reported high levels of public trust that scientists (87%) and doctors (95%) tell the truth^[3]. Mainstream media

^[1] Wellcome Trust Monitor Report Wave 4 November 2019, Public interest and engagement with health research

^[2] Public Attitudes to Science 2019, carried out by Kantar, on behalf of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

^[3] Veracity Index 2020, Ipsos MORI survey of trust in professions

such as television and newspapers (online) continue to be some of the most common and significant sources of science news that people access^[4], 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 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 three members of staff providing essential support to the running of the Centre.

^[4] Reuters institute Digital News Report 2020

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 Sun on a controversial science subject, give an interview for Sky News on a breaking news story, or speak to a journalist at The Guardian 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. 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. COVID-19 and the unprecedented level of media interest in hearing from experts have put a particular spotlight on the role of researchers. Those researchers on our database stepped up to meet this demand, helping field up to dozens of media enquiries and multiple requests for comments each day. 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. The main focus of our work in 2020-21 was COVID-19. The SMC helped journalists cover what was happening both

globally and within the UK, and helped ensure that up to date evidence and the best quality expertise was central to media reporting. This was far and away the largest element of our work during the period under review. Beyond COVID we have continued to work across ongoing developments in the areas of diet and nutrition, dementia, climate change, biodiversity, and genome editing.

This year we ran 156 online press briefings (142 of those on COVID-19) which is **over double the number of briefings** we'd run in an average year. We sent out 1223 roundups and rapid reactions (1069 of those on COVID-19) of expert commentary, which is **3 times the number** sent out in an average year. During the first wave of the pandemic (April and May 2020) our output was approximately **5 times our usual**.

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 inform the media.

The SMC runs events each year where the purpose is to introduce scientists, clinicians, and engineers to the importance of working with media, and to encourage and support them to get involved with doing so. These events are aimed at experts who have little to no experience of dealing with the media. These 'Introduction to the News Media' events include talks and panel sessions with press officers, media-experienced scientists and journalists who provide insights into how the media works, what journalists want and need from scientists, and how scientists can best help journalists accurately cover science for the benefit of the public.

In the past year, the SMC has run one 'Introduction to the News Media' event, which was hosted online in July 2021. Over 120 research active scientists and associated press officers attended the event. Feedback was very positive. All respondents to the post-event survey rated all aspects of the event (organisation, content, format and speakers) as either 'good' (~30%) or 'very good' (~70%) and all said they would recommend the event to others. The SMC was also able to recruit top scientists to our expert database post-event. This important follow up activity means that we are able to capitalise on their improved perception and understanding of how science is reported in the UK and work with them in future to help improve accurate coverage in their area of expertise even further.

The SMC has supported 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 MRC and NIHR. The SMC was responsible for recruiting the participants, who attend these sessions for free. This year participants were selected for their work on COVID-19. Focusing on COVID-19 meant their area of expertise was guaranteed to be in demand from journalists so giving them the skills and confidence to engage with the media was key in bringing more top women scientists to the forefront of media reporting. The SMC also gave a talk at each of these sessions and recruited these experts to the database afterwards. There have

been 9 sessions training 37 researchers from 18 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.

“Going over other people’s interviews also gave us a very good idea of best and not so good practice. How to bridge and bring the interviewer to our playing field. Tips on background, light, etc. were very useful too – this is not what we learn about in our careers and it is difficult to know where to start.

“The facilitators were really helpful and knowledgeable and very happy to share their expertise with us to be able to help us to develop and feel more confident in this area.”

“It’s a wonderful course and I will be vastly more confident engaging with the media going forward.”

Finally, 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 played a vital role in the media reporting of the COVID-19 pandemic, for example collating expert comments on government announcements on changes to policy including the use of facemasks, introduction of the tier system or new local restrictions, the steps

for leaving lockdown, new variants, and travel policies, along with the daily case numbers, weekly R number and growth rates, and hospitalisations and death figures.

We've also gathered responses on developing news around the COVID-19 vaccine development and roll out, including the MHRA approval of vaccines, the JCVI advice on priority for vaccination, and the early concerns around the possibility of a link between the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine and rare blood clots.

While COVID-19 dominated the news agenda, other examples of rapid reactions included gathering expert comments on; the poisoning of Alexi Navalny with the nerve agent Novichok, the UK's 2030 emissions targets, the government's 'ten point plan for a Green Industrial Revolution', the Dasgupta review on the economics of biodiversity, and the explosion at a waste water treatment works in Avonmouth.

Roundups

This service is unique to the SMC and has become a key tool for the Centre and for specialist science 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. Print and broadcast journalists can lift quotes for their reports and follow up for further interviews with the experts.

With the sheer volume of research coming out on COVID-19, it was even more important to help journalists navigate this information overload and work out which papers represented significant new developments in our understanding of the pandemic, which were replications of already known data and which were of poor quality or with serious flaws or limitations where one could not be confident in the conclusions. A newer aspect of our Roundups this year has been a much greater focus on academic work in its preprint form before it has been published in a journal and peer reviewed.

While working on COVID-19, some examples of roundups included getting comments on phase 1,2 and 3 results of the vaccine trials and real world vaccine efficacy data, research looking at who is most at risk from catching the disease, clinical data for risk factors for disease severity and mortality, modelling work on the impact of non-pharmaceutical interventions on the number of cases, surveys on wellbeing and mental health of different demographics during the pandemic, and studies investigating the characteristics of new variants of concern.

Examples of non-COVID roundups included studies on air pollution and macular degeneration, egg consumption and health, consumption of red meat and plant based foods and risk of heart

disease, a potential drug for treating obesity, data on alcohol specific deaths in the UK, and a study on changes to the Gulf Stream System.

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.

Our work on COVID-19 has included the launches and results of many major studies and projects, such as the (PHOSP) Post-Hospitalisation COVID-19 Study, the Com-COV study looking into mixing different vaccine schedules, COG-UK and the 'G2P-UK' National Virology Consortium which investigate and monitor the genomics of the virus and new variants, the RECOVERY and REMAP-CAP trials into treatments for COVID-19, human challenge trials, the SIREN study looking at rates of reinfection among healthcare workers, ISARIC4C looking at the clinical disease and risk factors for severe illness, the REACT programs monitoring both prevalence and previous exposure in the general population, and PHE data on transmission in schools.

We have hosted several of the vaccine development groups discussing their results of phase 1,2 and 3 trials and approvals by the medical regulators, including the Oxford AstraZeneca, Novavax, Pfizer BioNTech, and Janssen teams, along with briefings on the immunological and real world data on vaccine effectiveness such as through the work of the UK Coronavirus Immunology Consortium.

We've run briefings on the subjects of psychiatric and neurological consequences of COVID-19, explaining the process of SAGE, the Academy of Medical Sciences Winter Report, the severity of disease in children, and discussing the impact the pandemic has had on cancer research and treatment. We have also hosted regular Q&As on big topical areas such as the emergence of new variants of concern, and a background briefing on how to report on modelling studies.

Examples of non-COVID briefings include the report launch from the International Commission on the Clinical Use of Human Germline Genome Editing, the Global Carbon Budget, a response from the scientific community to multi billion pound funding cuts to science research, and research by the Royal Society into ethnicity in STEM higher education in the UK.

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 have 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, or whether to run a press briefing.

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 six new blogposts, in the last year SMC staff have been featured in articles and comment pieces published in Press Gazette, Research Fortnight, Nature, The Times, PR Week, BMJ and Times Higher Education. Fiona Fox has also done interviews with Society for Applied Microbiology, The Biologist and Brunswick about the media coverage of the pandemic and role scientists have played. Fiona Fox sat on a panel arranged by the Association of British Science Writers titled 'Political vs science correspondents covering Covid-19: conflict or cooperation?', spoke in conversation with Tom Feilden (Science Editor of BCB Radio 4 Today Programme) & Prof Sir Charles Godfray (Director of the Oxford Martin School) on the topic of "Science communication in times of emergency" and appears as a guest on BBC Radio 4's 'Scientists in the Spotlight' programme.

The SMC has also spoken at webinars for the National Council for the Training of Journalists and on the QUEST (QUality and Effectiveness in Science and Technology communication) podcast series.

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 2020–21 exceeded the fundraising expectations of the Centre and ended with a surplus of £127,955 (£59,794 in 2019–20). In part this was due to a successful fundraising drive carried out in summer 2020 and in part due to timing of donations. The SMC anticipates its income returning to levels more akin to 2019–20 in future periods.

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.

The COVID–19 pandemic could not have shown more clearly the importance of providing the public access to the best quality research and expertise via the national news media. The appetite for expertise from journalists has never been higher in the history of the SMC and staff have continued to show incredible commitment to the mission of the SMC. The impact of this work in ensuring more accurate, balanced and rational coverage of science in the UK media has been strong and measurable.

During the past twelve months, we held 156 press conferences with an average attendance of 33 journalists from the national news media for COVID–19 briefings and an average attendance of 16 for non–COVID briefings. Together these briefings produced over 2400 pieces of coverage in the national news media. We also released over 1223 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 keep up to date with new contentious issues, responding with expert comment, media briefings and supporting the scientists working in these areas to speak out about their research.

COVID-19 dominated the news media this year and the SMC response has been phenomenal. We have expanded our list of experts in the relevant fields of infectious diseases, virology, modelling, clinical trials, intensive care, vaccinology, and immunology and worked closely with them to stay up to date with upcoming research and reports on COVID-19. These experts have sat on many SMC briefing panels, provided expert commentary via roundups and rapid reactions, and spoken to journalists, ensuring that scientific expertise and the evidence was prominent in the UK's national news coverage of the pandemic.

We have continued to engage with the research community about how best to communicate research and expertise. In the past year SMC staff have given talks at Imperial College London, King's College London, UCL Institute of Clinical Trials and Methodology, the Department of Statistics at the University of Oxford, and spoken at a Russell Group communications network event, an IGEM (Institute of Gas Engineers & Managers) workshop, the Sabri Ülker Foundation Science Communication Conference, an early career researcher webinar session for the Violence, Abuse and Mental Health Network, a Royal Society roundtable on climate misinformation, a session at the Universities UK Marketing and Communications conference, a roundtable discussion for the Media Workshop run by the Royal Society of Edinburgh's Post-Covid Futures Commission, and at a conference session for EARA (European Animal Research Association) on improving openness in animal research within the European Neuroscience community.

2. Continue to look into the changing role of science press officers

The SMC became one of the main press offices used by national news journalists throughout the pandemic as many universities and research institutes had moved away from direct science media relations, especially when it came to sourcing individual experts for interviews and comments rapidly on a day to day basis.

Fiona Fox has also written about this change of focus within communications teams in PR Week with a spotlight on communications around the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequences of moving away from providing experts for journalists to instead focus on corporate communications, social media and content creation – that these press offices were poorly equipped to deal with a story of this scale and nature.

The SMC has also blogged on the role of political interference in communications around COVID-19 research and pushed for research to be communicated independently of government communications.

3. Look to adapt our work to ensure that the SMC is able to continue to support journalists and help experts engage with the news media on COVID-19, despite changes and restrictions to office working and staff, scientists and journalists working from home.

The SMC staff have been working remotely for the entirety of this financial year. In order to facilitate this we had to transition each member of staff to a work from home set up, had to significantly alter our internship programme, and accelerate work to make our systems and files more accessible remotely. We also had to develop a system for hosting online briefings for journalists (something which prior to the pandemic were almost exclusively in person), through the use of a video conferencing platform we have developed a very efficient process that enabled us to run more briefings than any other year. We have also provided advice in running online press briefings to other scientific organisations.

During the busiest times, we also brought in additional staff to help support the press team.

4. Discuss and engage with researchers and press officers about the changing ways research is publicised and communicated during the COVID-19 pandemic and advice on how best to ensure accurate and measured coverage

One of the major shifts in communication of scientific research over the COVID-19 pandemic was the prominence of preprints and the level of media attention they attract. Before COVID-19 the SMC had written up guidance to researchers and press officers about press work on preprints, essentially cautioning against promoting them before journal publication.

However, when it came to the pandemic, knowledge was accumulating very quickly and research was being shared rapidly on preprint servers and journalists were beginning to pick this up. At times it was the only source available for the latest research on the developing science on COVID-19. Tom Sheldon has worked on specific guidance for scientists and press officers around the risk and benefits of media work on preprints on COVID-19, still urging caution, while acknowledging there are circumstances where it's very clear that the findings are significant and need to be in the public domain urgently.

We have shared this guidance widely and discussed these issues in depth on the SMC blog. We also regularly offered advice and support to other press offices looking into whether it is appropriate to do media work on a new preprint. Tom Sheldon has run sessions on the role of preprints with ASAPbio.

The SMC has contributed to the Vaccine Media Hub project, along with the other global SMCs and Meedan to help share COVID-19 vaccine expertise to journalists beyond 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 2020–21 was £30,000. 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 ten years 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 £722,170 (£604,908 in 2019–20).

Total expenditure for the year was £595,209 (£545,114 in 2019–20) of which 96% (94% in 2019–20) was spent on charitable activities directly carrying out the Charity's key objectives.

The activities for the year therefore resulted in a surplus of £127,955 (£59,794 in 2019–20).

Investment policy

During this period the SMC placed £60,224 into an investment fund. It is the intention of the Trustees to keep 12 months' running costs in high interest 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 £808,179 in reserves, all of which are unrestricted, as of 31 March 2021 (£680,224 in 2019–20).

Our year end fund position of £808,179 is comfortably in excess of our £600,000 reserves target. On this basis we are satisfied we are a going concern.

Trustees periodically review the reserves policy of the Charity.

Plans for the future

The current period has seen the SMC's tenth 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 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.

Because of the nature of this pandemic, it's impossible to fully predict how much COVID-19 will dominate our work for the next year but we will continue to host briefings on important new research on the pandemic, including on treatments, vaccine developments, future modelling of the roadmap and exit from lockdown, immunity, and variants of concern. We will gather third party expert comments on new policy announcements and new research papers to support journalists in their reporting and help reflect the most up to date state of evidence.

Part of our work on COVID-19 will also be adjusting the output on the subject so that it remains useful for journalists and covers the right topics and issues so we will continue to speak with journalists to get the balance right.

We will also continue to work with RNA Media on their media training of women scientists working on COVID-19 research.

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

For the last year, the work of the SMC has been almost exclusively on COVID-19 with very little space in the media for coverage of other stories. As dominance of COVID-19 across the news media is likely to decrease, there will be more scope for other areas of science, health and environment research and news to be reported on, and the SMC will ensure that we keep up to date with these upcoming stories and respond appropriately.

The SMC will ensure that on anticipated stories such as COP-26 and the Defra consultation on the regulation of genetic technologies, we will be in contact with the best scientists in these areas to stay abreast of future relevant research and policy announcements so we are ready to respond with briefings, rapid reactions and roundups.

We will continue to monitor the media for any potential stories where input from expert commentary would be important to ensure accurate reporting and help researchers in these areas provide written comments to the media, present at press briefings and speak directly with journalists.

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

As the SMC looks to return to office working we will have to consider the future of our press briefings for journalists. Currently we offer our briefings entirely online, however we aim to have the flexibility to have a hybrid in-person and online system. This will require research and investment into new audio visual technology to ensure the standard of our briefings is not impacted by the change.

We will continue to have discussions with journalists, press officers and scientists on what is both feasible and practical in terms of returning to in person meetings and briefings.

4. 20th Anniversary of the Science Media Centre

2022 will be the 20th anniversary of the creation of the Science Media Centre. To mark this, the SMC will examine ways we can assess the impact the SMC has had on media coverage of contentious scientific issues in the UK, and celebrate the achievements of the SMC and all those who have been involved. This work will include discussions with key figures in science communications and journalism with the possibility of commissioning research into topics of interest.

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.

Science Media Centre

Trustees' annual report

For the year ended 31 March 2021

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 eight 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
Selina Kermode	Resigned 1 Sep 2020
Julian Hitchcock	Resigned 8 Oct 2020
Jo Revill	Resigned 8 Oct 2020
Francesca Unsworth	Resigned 8 Oct 2020
Dr Paul Brooker	
Adrian Bull MBE	
John Davidson	
Prof Ann Jacqueline Hunter	
Prof Kevin McConway	
Gavin Allen	Appointed 8 Oct 2020
Jonathan Brüün	Appointed 8 Oct 2020
Alex Keenlyside	Appointed 8 Oct 2020

Staff

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

Fiona Fox OBE	Chief Executive
Tom Sheldon	Senior Press Manager
Lara Muth	Operations Manager, until 31 Aug 2020
Selina Kermode	Head of Operations, from 1 Sep 2020

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 eight 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
- 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 2021 was 10 (2020:11). 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 14 October 2021 and signed on their behalf by

Jonathan Baker
Chair of Trustees

Science Media Centre

Funders list

For the year ended 31 March 2021

£2,000 and under

Personal donations from 6 individuals, each donation not exceeding £2,000

Alzheimer's Society
Association for Clinical Biochemistry & Laboratory Medicine
Association of Medical Research Charities
British Society of Immunology
Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers
Durham University
ESHRE
Health Data Research UK (HDRUK)
Institute of Physics & Engineering in Medicine
Institution of Chemical Engineers
Institution of Gas Engineers & Managers
John Innes Centre
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
National Oceanography Centre
Nuclear Industry Association
Pirbright Institute
Quadram Institute Bioscience
Science Museum
Society for Radiological Protection
The Times
UK Cleaning Products Industry Association
University of Birmingham
University of Exeter
University of Glasgow
University of Leeds
University of Portsmouth
University of Sheffield
University of Warwick
University of York

£2,001 – £4,999

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

Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board
Alzheimer's Research UK
Biochemical Society
British Ecological Society
British Pharmacological Society
Cochrane Collaboration
Covestro UK Limited
Food & Drink Federation

Science Media Centre

Funders list

For the year ended 31 March 2021

Genomics England
Informa (Taylor & Francis)
Institute of Cancer Research
Met Office
Microbiology Society
Mobile UK
National Nuclear Laboratory
Newcastle University
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
Physiological Society
Procter & Gamble UK
Queen Mary, University of London
Queen's University Belfast
Royal College of Psychiatrists
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
Royal Society
Royal Society of Biology
Society for Endocrinology
University of East Anglia
University of Manchester
University of Nottingham
University of Reading

£5,000 – £9,999

Abb Vie Ltd
ABPI
Academy of Medical Sciences
BASF
Bayer plc
BioIndustry Association
BP International
Bristol University
Bristows LLP – pro bono support
British Heart Foundation
Cancer Research UK
Chemical Industries Association
Cytiva
Danone Holdings UK
FoodDrinkEurope
Francis Crick Institute
GE Healthcare
Imperial College London
Institution of Engineering and Technology
Institute of Physics

Science Media Centre

Funders list

For the year ended 31 March 2021

Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience
John Wiley & Sons
King's College London including Inspire the Mind Blog
Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)
National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence
Nestle UK Ltd
Nutrition Society
Rolls-Royce Plc
Royal Academy of Engineering
Sellafield Sites
UCB Pharma Ltd
UK Centre of Ecology & Hydrology
University of Cambridge including MRC Biostatistics Unit
University of Edinburgh
University of Oxford

£10,000 – £19,999

AstraZeneca
DeepMind Technologies Limited
Dept of Health & Social Care
Elsevier
Food Standards Agency
LifeArc
Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD)
Sanofi Aventis
Society for Applied Microbiology
Springer Nature Ltd
University College London

£20,000 – £30,000

Diageo Plc
DMG Media
Full Fact – from a Google grant *
Gatsby Charitable Foundation
GlaxoSmithKline
National Institute for Health Research

* Full Fact were given a block grant from Google to distribute around Europe. Full Fact made the decision to give money to SMC, but the money was sourced from Google.

Over £30,000

UK Research & Innovation
Wellcome Trust

Independent examiner's report

To the trustees of

Science Media Centre

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Science Media Centre for the year ended 31 March 2021.

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

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: 15 November 2021

Science Media Centre

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

For the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2021 Total £	Unrestricted £	2020 as Restated Total £
Income from:						
Donations	2	708,567	–	708,567	603,076	603,076
Charitable activities	3	–	13,184	13,184	–	–
Investments	4	419	–	419	1,832	1,832
Total income		708,986	13,184	722,170	604,908	604,908
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds	5	29,627	–	29,627	42,522	42,522
Charitable activities	5	552,398	13,184	565,582	502,592	502,592
Total expenditure		582,025	13,184	595,209	545,114	545,114
Net income before net gains on investments		126,961	–	126,961	59,794	59,794
Net gains on investments		994	–	994	–	–
Net income for the year	6	127,955	–	127,955	59,794	59,794
Reconciliation of funds:						
Total funds brought forward as previously reported		680,224	–	680,224	620,430	620,430
Prior year adjustment	19	–	–	–	20,000	20,000
Total funds brought forward as restated		680,224	–	680,224	640,430	640,430
Total funds carried forward		808,179	–	808,179	680,224	680,224

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 17a to the financial statements.

As at 31 March 2021

	Note	£	2021 £	£	2020 as Restated £
Fixed assets:					
Tangible assets	11		-		842
Investments	12		61,218		-
			61,218		842
Current assets:					
Debtors	13	81,340		46,125	
Cash at bank and in hand		717,927		664,770	
		799,267		710,895	
Liabilities:					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14	(52,306)		(31,513)	
Net current assets			746,961		679,382
Total net assets			808,179		680,224
The funds of the charity:					
Unrestricted income funds:	17a				
General funds		808,179		680,224	
Total unrestricted funds			808,179		680,224
Total charity funds			808,179		680,224

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 14 October 2021 and signed on their behalf by

Jonathan Baker
Chair of Trustees

Science Media Centre

Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 March 2021

	2021		2020 as Restated	
	£	£	£	£
Cash flows from operating activities				
Net income for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	127,955		59,794	
Depreciation charges	267		337	
(Gains) on investments	(994)		–	
Dividends, interest and rent from investments	(419)		(1,832)	
Loss on the disposal of fixed assets	575		–	
(Increase) in debtors	(35,215)		(21,841)	
Increase in creditors	20,793		14,026	
		<u>112,962</u>		<u>50,484</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities				
Cash flows from investing activities:				
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	419		1,832	
Proceeds from the sale of fixed assets	–		258	
Purchase of fixed assets	–		(1,066)	
Purchase of investments	(60,224)		–	
		<u>(59,805)</u>		<u>1,024</u>
Net cash (used in) investing activities				
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		53,157		51,508
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the		664,770		613,262
		<u>664,770</u>		<u>613,262</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		<u>717,927</u>		<u>664,770</u>

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 £808,179 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.

1 Accounting policies (continued)

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) Tangible fixed assets

Items of equipment are capitalised where the purchase price exceeds £2,000. Depreciation costs are allocated to activities on the basis of the use of the related assets in those activities. Assets are reviewed for impairment if circumstances indicate their carrying value may exceed their net realisable value and value in use.

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write down the cost of each asset to its estimated residual value over its expected useful life. The depreciation rates in use are as follows:

- Fixtures, fittings & equipment 4 years

i) 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.

j) Debtors

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

k) 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.

l) 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.

m) 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

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2021 Total £	Unrestricted £	2020 Total £
Donations and gifts	471,117		471,117	410,626	410,626
Grants receivable for core activities	70,000	–	70,000	40,000	40,000
Government grants:					
UK Research & Innovation	95,000	–	95,000	71,000	71,000
UK Research & Innovation (Dept. for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy)	–	–	–	40,000	40,000
Food Standards Agency	10,000	–	10,000	10,000	10,000
National Institute for Clinical Excellence	5,000	–	5,000	5,000	5,000
National Institute for Health Research	15,000	–	15,000	5,000	5,000
Sellafield Sites	5,000	–	5,000	5,000	5,000
Genomics England	4,000	–	4,000	4,000	4,000
Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory	5,000	–	5,000	5,000	5,000
National Nuclear Laboratory	2,500	–	2,500	2,500	2,500
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust	4,950	–	4,950	4,950	4,950
Department for Health and Social Care	10,000	–	10,000	–	–
Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board	3,000	–	3,000	–	–
Met Office	3,000	–	3,000	–	–
Donated services	5,000	–	5,000	–	–
	708,567	–	708,567	603,076	603,076

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2021 Total £	Unrestricted £	2020 Total £
COVID-19 Vaccine Media	–	3,184	3,184	–	–
National Institute for Health Research	–	10,000	10,000	–	–
Total income from charitable activities	–	13,184	13,184	–	–

4 Income from investments

	2021 £	2020 £
Interest	419	1,832
	419	1,832

All income from investments is unrestricted.

Science Media Centre

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2021

5a Analysis of expenditure (current year)

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Governance costs £	Support costs	2021 Total £	2020 Total £
Staff costs (Note 7)	23,791	431,799	-	-	455,590	427,580
Event costs	-	14,157	-	-	14,157	18,493
Premises costs	-	-	-	36,043	36,043	46,933
Office costs	-	-	13	46,124	46,137	19,288
Travel, meetings and subsistence	-	-	-	237	237	5,218
Insurance	-	-	428	7,463	7,891	7,520
Professional fees	-	8,744	5,000	-	13,744	6,145
Accountancy	-	-	-	15,521	15,521	9,000
Independent examiner's fee	-	-	5,400	-	5,400	4,271
Bank charges	-	-	-	222	222	329
Depreciation	-	-	-	267	267	337
	<u>23,791</u>	<u>454,700</u>	<u>10,841</u>	<u>105,877</u>	<u>595,209</u>	<u>545,114</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>545,114</u>

Science Media Centre

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2021

5b Analysis of expenditure (prior year)

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Governance costs £	Support costs	2020 Total £
Staff costs (Note 7)	35,090	392,490	-	-	427,580
Event costs	-	18,493	-	-	18,493
Premises costs	-	-	-	46,933	46,933
Office costs	-	-	48	19,240	19,288
Travel, meetings and subsistence	-	-	1,403	3,815	5,218
Insurance	-	-	-	7,520	7,520
Professional fees	-	6,145	-	-	6,145
Accountancy	-	-	-	9,000	9,000
Independent examiner's fee	-	-	4,271	-	4,271
Bank charges	-	-	-	329	329
Depreciation	-	-	-	337	337
	<u>35,090</u>	<u>417,128</u>	<u>5,722</u>	<u>87,174</u>	<u>545,114</u>
Governance costs	458	5,264	(5,722)	-	-
Support costs	6,974	80,200	-	(87,174)	-
	<u>42,522</u>	<u>502,592</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>545,114</u>

6 Net income for the year

This is stated after charging / (crediting):

	2021	2020
	£	£
Depreciation	267	337
Independent Examiner's Fee (excluding VAT):		
Independent Examination	3,000	3,559
Other services	1,500	-
	<u>1,500</u>	<u>-</u>

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

Staff costs were as follows:

	2021	2020
	£	£
Salaries and wages	395,774	365,067
Social security costs	38,147	36,768
Employer's contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	21,669	18,310
	<u>455,590</u>	<u>420,145</u>

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

	2021	2020
	No.	No.
£60,000 – £69,999	1	-
£90,000 – £99,999	1	1
	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

The total employee benefits (including pension contributions and employer's national insurance) of the key management personnel were £233,371 (2020: £235,953).

The charity trustees were neither paid nor received any other benefits from employment with the charity in the year (2020: £nil). No charity trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2020: £nil).

Trustees' expenses represents the payment or reimbursement of travel and subsistence costs totalling £nil (2020: £627) incurred by 0 (2020: 3) 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 (2020 restated: 9).

9 Related party transactions

Science Media Centre received pro bono solicitors advice from Bristows LLP with a value of £5,000 in 2020/21 (2019/20: none). Alex Keenlyside is a trustee of Science Media Centre and a partner at Bristows LLP.

There were no related party transactions in 2020.

10 Taxation

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

11 Tangible fixed assets

Cost	Fixtures, fittings & equipment £	Total £
At the start of the year	2,515	2,515
Disposals in year	(2,515)	(2,515)
At the end of the year	-	-
Depreciation		
At the start of the year	1,673	1,673
Charge for the year	267	267
Eliminated on disposal	(1,940)	(1,940)
At the end of the year	-	-
Net book value		
At the end of the year	-	-
At the start of the year	842	842

All of the above assets are used for charitable purposes.

12 Listed investments

	2021 £	2020 £
Fair value at the start of the year	-	-
Additions at cost	60,224	-
Net gain / (loss) on change in fair value	994	-
Fair value at the end of the year	<u>61,218</u>	<u>-</u>

Investments comprise:

	2021 £	2020 £
UK Common investment funds	61,218	-
	<u>61,218</u>	<u>-</u>

13 Debtors

	2021 £	2020 as Restated £
Trade debtors	79,201	20,502
Other debtors	1,239	24,850
Prepayments	900	773
	<u>81,340</u>	<u>46,125</u>

In the prior year accounts £20,502 of trade debtors were shown as prepayments. These balances have been restated to better represent the classification of debtors.

14 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021 £	2020 £
Trade creditors	18,249	295
Taxation and social security	-	10,435
Accruals	5,400	20,783
Deferred income (note 15)	28,657	-
	<u>52,306</u>	<u>31,513</u>

15 Deferred income

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

	2021 £	2020 £
Balance at the beginning of the year	-	-
Amount released to income in the year	-	-
Amount deferred in the year	28,657	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Balance at the end of the year	28,657	-
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

16a Analysis of net assets between funds (current year)

	General unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total funds £
Investments	61,218	-	61,218
Net current assets	746,961	-	746,961
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net assets at 31 March 2021	808,179	-	808,179
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

16b Analysis of net assets between funds (prior year as restated)

	General unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total funds £
Tangible fixed assets	842	-	842
Net current assets	679,382	-	679,382
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net assets at 31 March 2020	680,224	-	680,224
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

17a Movements in funds (current year)

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

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

17b Movements in funds (prior year as restated)

	At 1 April 2019 £	Income & gains £	Expenditure & losses £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2020 £
Unrestricted funds:					
General funds	620,430	604,908	(545,114)	-	680,224
Total unrestricted funds	620,430	604,908	(545,114)	-	680,224
Total funds	620,430	604,908	(545,114)	-	680,224

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.

18 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.

19 Prior year adjustment

	Unrestricted 31 March 2020 £	Restricted 31 March 2020 £	Total £
Reserves position			
Funds previously reported	660,224		660,224
Adjustments on restatement			
Movement following review of income recognition policy	20,000		20,000
Funds restated	680,224		680,224
	Unrestricted 31 March 2020 £	Restricted 31 March 2020 £	Total £
Impact on income and expenditure			
Net income as previously reported	39,794		39,794
Adjustments on restatement			
Movement following review of income recognition policy	20,000		20,000
Net income as restated	59,794		59,794