

Company number: 07560997

Charity Number: 1140827

# Science Media Centre

Report and financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

# Science Media Centre

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### For the year ended 31 March 2023

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## Science Media Centre

### Reference and administrative information

For the year ended 31 March 2023

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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:

Nicholas Hillier	Chair
Karen Chadwick	Treasurer
John Davidson	
Prof Kevin McConway	
Jonathan Brüün	
Alex Keenlyside	
Alice Henchley	
Joanne Manning	
Amanda Borton	Appointed 20 October 2022
Jonathan Baker	Resigned 20 October 2022
Paul Brooker	Resigned 20 October 2022

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

## Science Media Centre

### Reference and administrative information

For the year ended 31 March 2023

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#### Bankers

HSBC Bank PLC  
16 King Street  
Covent Garden  
London  
WC2E 8JF

CCLA  
Senator House  
85 Queen Victoria Street  
London  
EC4V 4ET

#### 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 2023.

Reference and administrative information set out on pages 1 and 2 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 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 2023 is the SMC's twelfth year as a fully independent organisation, but also its twenty first 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 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 (83%),

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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)

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

engineers (87%), and doctors (85%) 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, and even on social media platforms, the source of science news is frequently from mainstream news sources originally<sup>5,6</sup>. Working with the mainstream news media therefore provides 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.

During the period a governance review was carried out. The articles of association, terms of reference and other the policies were updated. This has allowed us to be more efficient in furtherance of the objects. 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 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 so that the public have access to the best expertise on these issues via the media.

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<sup>4</sup> Veracity Index 2022, Ipsos MORI survey of trust in professions

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

<sup>6</sup> Science and the media in Great Britain – survey results, IPOS poll

Staff are the main resource of the SMC and five 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. During the period we took on a part-time member of staff for the Global Co-ordinator role.

## 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 BBC 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 helping journalists to assess the significance of these new stories and papers. 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, with a focus on the potentially messy, controversial or politicised issues that make headlines in the UK national

press. This meant providing journalists with regular access to the best experts on infectious diseases, vaccines, climate, dementia, pharmacology and diet among many others, helping to ensure that this scientific evidence and expertise was central to media reporting, and that the public had access to accurate information.

This year we ran 69 press briefings. We sent out 394 roundups and rapid reactions. This is on a par with other average years (excluding 2019–2020, 2020–21, 2021–22), suggesting that workload has shifted to more regular levels since the COVID–19 pandemic.

### 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 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 based on their media engagement work with us.

### 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 accurate media reporting of newly developing stories such as cases of hepatitis in children of unknown cause, a large monkeypox outbreak over the summer of 2022, poliovirus detected in North East London, the extreme heatwave in the UK, updates to the COVID vaccination programme, advances in nuclear fusion



technology, new drug trial announcements for Alzheimer's disease, government announcements on fracking and many more.

#### *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 ultra processed food and cancer risk, Mediterranean diet and dementia, or sleep quality in adolescence and multiple sclerosis. 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, such as a roundup on a study of aspirin use and risk of ovarian cancer or on a study on paracetamol use in pregnancy and attentional issues in children. A roundup may also be done in response to a study where it's important to recognise the limits of real world interpretation or implications, and expert commentary can help achieve this, such as roundups this year on an umbrella analysis of the 'serotonin theory of depression', a study on noradrenergic drugs and Alzheimer's disease, and a study on the effects of e-cigarette vapour on mice.

#### *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. Average attendance at press briefings remains high, especially with the hybrid dial-in option which has been available since the pandemic.

### Trustees' annual report

#### For the year ended 31 March 2023

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We have run briefings on significant new reports and papers on the evidence of important headline issues of the day such as the efficacy of insomnia drugs, mindfulness in schools, vaping benefits and risks, and the Chief Medical Officers' report on air pollution. Background briefings we have run – in which we host experts in a field to answer journalists' questions on a topical media issue – include sessions on avian flu, seasonal flu, the impact of social media, maintaining brain health, ChatGPT, droughts, and heatwaves.

#### *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.

#### 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 an SMC press briefing on a new piece of research.

The SMC also recognises and champions the crucial role press officers play in responsible science communication, something highlighted in this year's Changing Role of Science Press Officers report. 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.

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. Freya Robb is a Stempra committee member.

## Fundraising

The year 2022–23 ended with a surplus of £19,767 (2022: £30,921), representing another good year of fundraising for the SMC.

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 in-house 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.

As part of a programme of activities to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the SMC in April 2022 the SMC carried out a fundraising drive. Through this we raised £48,550.

## 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 significant new scientific development or paper with nuance or balance, or standfirsts explaining that leading scientists questioned the latest findings or cautioned against overinterpretation of the results.

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

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.

In the first half of this year there was still reasonable media interest in COVID-19, mainly on updates to the vaccine data efficacy, next generation vaccines, and the longer term consequences of the virus and pandemic itself. There was also sporadic interest in the COVID infection figures from surveillance surveys such as ONS and REACT. We continued to host briefings and collate third party commentary on research in these areas.

This year there was also significantly more media appetite for stories beyond COVID-19. Some of these stories included outbreaks of other infectious diseases both human and animal, vaping, antidepressants, artificial intelligence, energy and climate change. These are many of the same issues that kept us busy before the pandemic and therefore already knew many of the key experts and how best to advise scientists on engaging with the media.

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

The SMC employed Dr Helen Jamison and Dr Claire Bithell to carry out the Changing Role of Science Press Officers project as part of the work around the Science Media Centre's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. There was a particular focus on research communications within universities,

examining if and how the role of a UK science press officer has changed over the last 20 years. The project involved in depth interviews with press and communications professionals at all career stages, an online survey of press officers and focus groups run with Ipsos. The report produced seven recommendations:

- Recommendation 1: Universities should prioritise research communications and ensure it is adequately resourced.
- Recommendation 2: Universities should value and invest in media relations skills within their communications teams.
- Recommendation 3: The SMC should encourage universities to engage with the news media when science is in the headlines, highlighting the value and impact.
- Recommendation 4: The SMC should champion the role of specialist science press officers in the same way it does specialist science journalists.
- Recommendation 5: The science community should explore improving career development and progression opportunities for science press and communications officers.
- Recommendation 6: The science community should explore and address the challenges caused by the harassment of scientists who engage with the media.
- Recommendation 7: Those conducting 'lessons learned' inquiries into the pandemic and beyond should include consideration of the role played by university communications teams.

This report was endorsed by many senior figures in the science and the university sector including Sir Patrick Vallance (ex-Chief Scientific Advisor), Prof Dame Anne Johnson (President, The Academy of Medical Sciences), Prof Dame Nancy Rothwell (President and Vice-Chancellor, The University of Manchester), Professor Liam Smeeth (Director, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine) and Professor Sir Malcolm Grant (Chancellor, University of York).

The report was widely publicised with articles in Times Higher Education<sup>7</sup>, Research Fortnight<sup>8</sup>, University World News<sup>9</sup> and international coverage in Wissenschaftskommunikation.de<sup>10</sup>.

The CROSPO report was also presented at a Stempra session, an online event run by Japan SciCom Forum, a Working Group on Science Communications convened by Science Europe, The Russell Group Communications Network and Universities UK.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/science-press-officers-work-life-balance-disappearing>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.researchprofessionalnews.com/rr-news-uk-views-of-the-uk-2022-7-pressure-on-press-offices-puts-trust-in-science-at-risk/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=2022082215344612>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.wissenschaftskommunikation.de/mehr-erkennung-erfolgsdruck-frustration-61113/> and <https://www.wissenschaftskommunikation.de/we-want-this-project-to-be-the-start-of-a-discussion-61171/>

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

The UK Science Media Centre hosted a three day meeting of the international Science Media Centre network in September 2022. The Chief Executives and representatives from the Australian, New Zealand, German, Taiwan, Spanish and African Science Media Centres were in attendance. This was also the first global in person meeting with the new Global Co-ordinator role. Topics of discussion included how each country, their scientists and media responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of preprints in the dissemination and communication of scientific research, and a discussion on the key core principles and functions that make a Science Media Centre.

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

2022 marked the 20th anniversary of the Science Media Centre and a number of projects and events took place to mark this occasion.

Chief Executive, Fiona Fox, published her book 'Beyond the Hype: The Inside Story of Science's Biggest Media Controversies' in April 2022. The book covered the creation of the SMC and an insight into some of the biggest science stories in the media over that time, and the role the SMC played. Publicity for the book enabled reviews and commentaries on the key themes of the book to feature in national news outlets such as the Observer<sup>11</sup>, Times Higher Education<sup>12</sup> and New Scientist<sup>13</sup>. Fiona also spoke on a podcast with the Royal Society of Arts and at an event with the Royal Institute discussing the history of the SMC and the stories in the book.

A series of podcasts was created by the SMC which focussed on the creation of and key stories from the 20 years of the SMC. It was hosted by Fiona Fox and invited key individuals who worked alongside the SMC on big media stories to speak about and reflect on the events, such as the sacking of David Nutt, human animal hybrids and Climategate.

We also commissioned an IPSOS survey – Science and the media in Great Britain. The results of this survey covered sources of information about science and health (both traditional and social media), trust in these sources and attitudes towards science and scientists. This piece of work was incredibly useful and in part replicated some aspects of an IPSOS survey commissioned by the SMC in 2002 so we could look at trends over the time the SMC has been in existence and use this to help guide discussions around the focus of our press work and target audiences in the future. A residential away day was organised for all staff and trustees to discuss the past ten years of work of the SMC and what the aims and objectives should be for the next ten years, creating the

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<sup>11</sup> Observer - Scientists must be free to communicate without politicians' spin  
<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2022/apr/03/scientists-must-be-free-to-communicate-without-politicians-spin>

<sup>12</sup> Times Higher Education - Pandemic was a missed opportunity for science advocacy  
<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/opinion/pandemic-was-missed-opportunity-science-advocacy>

<sup>13</sup> New Scientist - Say it loud and clear <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg25433840-100-we-need-to-stop-political-spin-from-polluting-public-trust-in-science/>

SMC strategy for 2022–2032<sup>14</sup>. This also included the start of a governance review of the advisory group and trustees.

The CROPSO report also formed part of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary projects (as discussed earlier in the report).

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

Through discussions within the team, along with some key scientists and journalists we worked with closely throughout the pandemic, the SMC drafted and published 'The Science Media Centre's recommendations on science and the media, based on our experience during the COVID-19 pandemic'. Fiona Lethbridge, who led this work, also wrote a blog on the SMC website to accompany the recommendations, "Could science be communicated better during the next pandemic?". We have publicised this work at numerous talks and events and shared with our network of press officers and scientists.

## Financial review

### Funding

The SMC is funded principally by scientific bodies, trusts and foundations, 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 2022–23 was £35,000. The SMC's Trustees and Advisory Group 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 21.

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<sup>14</sup> SMC Strategy 2022-2023 <https://www.sciencemediacentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/SMC-Strategy-2022-2032-1.pdf>

## Transactions and financial position

In its twelfth 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 £752,419 (£682,047 in 2021–22).

Total expenditure for the year was £730,918 (£661,360 in 2021–22) of which 94% (94% in 2021–22) was spent on charitable activities directly carrying out the Charity's key objectives.

The activities for the year therefore resulted in a surplus of £19,767 (£30,921 in 2021–22). This includes a £1,734 loss (£10,234 gain in 2021–22) on investments.

## Investment policy

The SMC has approximately £169,000 invested for growth. 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, the loss of data and the impact of inflation.

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 of scientists contributing to the media continues to be monitored by staff. Our policy on this was updated in June 2022 to include following up with any scientists who omit to respond to our first request. 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 £858,867 in reserves, of which £3,283 are restricted, as of 31 March 2023 (2022: £839,100). On this basis we are satisfied we are a going concern.

Our year end fund position of £858,867 is comfortably in excess of our £600,000 reserves target. The Trustees feel that in the current uncertain economic climate and high inflation it is prudent to hold a higher level of reserves. Furthermore a deficit budget has been planned for 2023–24.

Trustees periodically review the reserves policy of the Charity.

## Plans for the future

The current period has seen the SMC's twelfth 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.

We will continue to monitor the news for developing stories and issues where scientific expertise can help play a role in accurate reporting. On these issues, we will work closely with scientists who can provide third party comments on breaking news and new research as well as host them at press briefings for journalists on important new papers being published to ensure the science at hand is reported on in an accurate and measured way.



## 2. Refresh of the Science Media Centre's expert database

Having come out of the pandemic with our expert database refreshed with many new top experts in infectious diseases, vaccine development and immunology, we will spend the next year proactively recruiting experts in other key topic areas for the SMC, such as mental health, dementia, diet and nutrition, climate, cancer and energy. There will be a particular focus on up and coming researchers who are becoming leaders in their field to ensure we are continuing to reflect the very best of the mainstream scientific community in our expert database, and make these experts available to journalists when their area of expertise hits the headlines.

We will recruit the best experts on these 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.

## 3. Conferences

This year we will look more closely at media reporting of scientific conferences. It is common that work presented at scientific conferences is at a very early stage, often pre publication. While this provides an important part of scientific discussion and debate for scientists in attendance, it is common that journalists may attend these events and/ or receive press releases about some of the work being presented. There are some potential risks here around accurate communication of the science which can include a lack of peer review of the work in question and a lack of full data available to independent experts to scrutinise. The SMC will therefore speak with those involved in press work on conferences, and conference organisers, to seek their views on whether any changes should be considered and to see whether there is any additional role for the SMC in supporting accurate coverage from these events.

## 4. Improve the Science Media Centre's work on artificial intelligence

As artificial intelligence (AI) gains more traction in mainstream news coverage of science and technology – from uses in health care and diagnosis to opinion pieces on the risks of AI to jobs, safety and security – the SMC thinks it's crucial that we are able to respond to breaking news stories and new research in this discipline and get top experts in the field speaking to journalists. Some previous work we have done on AI has demonstrated that stories tend to reach the press in a different way to many other more 'typical' science stories. This year we will therefore conduct a project where we meet with key individuals and organisations within the field of AI to gain a better understanding of the key issues, how research reaches the media, and recruit top experts, as well as continuing to respond to media requests and breaking news stories. This is essential to ensure that media coverage of this fast developing and often controversial topic, is informed by the best evidence and expertise.

## 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 Group and others, and its implementation is delegated to the Chief Executive who, in conjunction with a team of nine additional staff, the Advisory Group and Trustees as appropriate, undertakes the necessary work.

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

A review of governance of the charity was carried out during the period. This resulted in a general meeting being held on 30 June 2022 to adopt updated Articles of Association. Further changes to terms of reference and policies were adopted in Oct 2022.

Following the governance review the previously named Advisory Committee was renamed the Advisory Group to make clear it is not a sub-committee of the Board of Trustees nor does it have delegated authority or decision making powers. All Trustees are also members of the Advisory Group. The Advisory Group is an independent, advisory group whose purpose is to provide independent, expert insight on matters concerned with science and engineering reporting in the media. It 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 a principal committee of the SMC and deals with issues such as financial planning, pensions, the annual audit and risk review and management. The Committee's terms of reference were updated in this period as part of the governance review. The Committee consists of a minimum of three members, with a majority of Committee members being Trustees, including the Treasurer. The remaining Committee members may be external members. Currently the Committee comprises four Trustees, including Treasurer and Treasurer-

## Science Media Centre

### Trustees' annual report

#### For the year ended 31 March 2023

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Elect, and three external members. The Senior Management Team attend in an observational capacity. The Committee meets three times a year.

The Remuneration Committee is another principal committee of the SMC and deals with issues of staff pay and reward. The terms of reference were also updated in this period as part of the governance review. The Remuneration Committee is comprised of a minimum of three members, all of whom are Trustees. The committee meets once a year and reports directly to the Trustees.

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

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

Nicholas Hillier	Chair
Karen Chadwick	Treasurer
John Davidson	
Prof Kevin McConway	
Jonathan Brüün	
Alex Keenlyside	
Alice Henchley	
Joanne Manning	
Amanda Borton	Appointed 20 October 2022
Paul Brooker	Resigned 20 October 2022
Jonathan Baker	Resigned 20 October 2022

#### 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
Fiona Lethbridge	Senior Press Manager

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 provided to staff currently include income protection insurance, dental insurance, ability to buy or sell leave, 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. 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.

During the period a new policy on trustee recruitment and induction was adopted, bringing the SMC in line with current practice. Trustees and staff consider the skills gaps formed by departing Trustees, and advertise for potential Trustees with skills to match. Applications are reviewed and

interviewed as necessary by current Trustees and staff. Prospective trustees are then proposed and appointed at October meeting each year.

## 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 terms of reference, 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.

## Science Media Centre

### Trustees' annual report

#### For the year ended 31 March 2023

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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 2023 was 9 (2022:10). 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 31 October 2023 and signed on their behalf by

Nicholas Hillier  
Chair of Trustees

Funders list

For the year ended 31 March 2023

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## Science Media Centre Funders, April 2022 – March 2023

### £2,000 and under

Personal donation from one individual  
Association of Medical Research Charities  
British Society of Immunology  
British Soft Drinks Association  
Envigo  
Institute of Physics & Engineering in Medicine  
National Oceanography Centre  
Science Museum Group (SMG)  
UK Cleaning Products Industry Association  
University of Birmingham  
University of Exeter  
University of Leeds  
University of Portsmouth  
University of Reading  
University of Sheffield  
University of York  
Wellcome Sanger Institute

### £2,001 – £4,999

Alzheimer's Research UK  
Astellas Pharma Europe Ltd  
BASF  
Biochemical Society  
British Pharmacological Society  
Covestro UK Limited  
Cystic Fibrosis Trust  
FoodDrinkEurope  
Health Data Research UK (HDRUK)  
Institute of Cancer Research  
John Innes Centre  
Keele University  
London School of Hygiene & Tropical  
Medicine  
Met Office  
Microbiology Society  
Mobile UK  
Motor Neurone Disease Association  
Newcastle University  
Nuclear Industry Association  
Physiological Society  
Quadram Institute Bioscience  
Queen Mary, University of London  
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health  
Royal Society  
Royal Society of Biology  
Sainsbury Laboratory  
Taylor & Francis  
University of East Anglia  
University of Glasgow  
University of Leicester  
University of Manchester  
University of Nottingham  
University of Surrey

## Science Media Centre

### Funders list

For the year ended 31 March 2023

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#### £5,000 – £9,999

Abbvie Ltd  
Academy of Medical Sciences  
Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry  
Bayer plc  
BioIndustry Association  
BP International  
Bristol University  
Cancer Research UK  
Chemical Industries Association  
Cochrane Collaboration  
Francis Crick Institute  
Genomics England  
Institute of Physics  
Institution of Engineering and Technology  
Janssen–Cilag Ltd  
John Wiley & Sons  
King's College London  
LifeArc  
National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence  
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  
Sequirus UK Limited  
Shionogi & Co Ltd  
Society for Applied Microbiology

UK Centre of Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH)  
University of Cambridge  
University of Edinburgh  
University of Oxford

#### £10,000 – £19,999

Abbott  
AstraZeneca  
British Heart Foundation  
CropLife International  
DeepMind Technologies Limited  
Diageo Plc  
Elsevier  
Financial Times  
Food Standards Agency  
Gilead Sciences  
Google  
Government Office for Science  
Imperial College London  
National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)  
Roche Products Ltd  
Sanofi Aventis

#### £20,000 – £30,000

DMG Media Ltd  
GlaxoSmithKline

#### Over £30,000

Gatsby Charitable Foundation  
Springer Nature Ltd  
UK Research & Innovation (UKRI)  
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 2023.

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 Accountants 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: 15 November 2023

Science Media Centre

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

For the year ended 31 March 2023

		2023			2022		
	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £
<b>Income from:</b>							
Donations	2	724,327	–	<b>724,327</b>	643,308	–	643,308
Charitable activities	3	–	25,000	<b>25,000</b>	–	38,657	38,657
Investments	4	3,092	–	<b>3,092</b>	82	–	82
<b>Total income</b>		<b>727,419</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>752,419</b>	<b>643,390</b>	<b>38,657</b>	<b>682,047</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>							
Raising funds	5	46,865	–	<b>46,865</b>	42,558	–	42,558
Charitable activities	5	652,336	31,717	<b>684,053</b>	590,145	28,657	618,802
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>699,201</b>	<b>31,717</b>	<b>730,918</b>	<b>632,703</b>	<b>28,657</b>	<b>661,360</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure) before net gains / (losses) on investments</b>		<b>28,218</b>	<b>(6,717)</b>	<b>21,501</b>	<b>10,687</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>20,687</b>
Net gains / (losses) on investments		(1,734)	–	<b>(1,734)</b>	10,234	–	10,234
<b>Net income / (expenditure) for the year</b>	6	<b>26,484</b>	<b>(6,717)</b>	<b>19,767</b>	<b>20,921</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>30,921</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>							
Total funds brought forward		829,100	10,000	<b>839,100</b>	808,179	–	808,179
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>855,584</b>	<b>3,283</b>	<b>858,867</b>	<b>829,100</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>839,100</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 2023

	Note	£	2023 £	£	2022 £
<b>Fixed assets:</b>					
Investments	11		<b>169,718</b>		171,452
			<u>169,718</u>		<u>171,452</u>
<b>Current assets:</b>					
Debtors	12	<b>137,559</b>		69,359	
Cash at bank and in hand		<b>595,810</b>		666,423	
			<u>733,369</u>	<u>735,782</u>	
<b>Liabilities:</b>					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	<b>(44,220)</b>		(68,134)	
			<u>689,149</u>		<u>667,648</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>			<b>689,149</b>		<b>667,648</b>
<b>Total net assets</b>			<b>858,867</b>		<b>839,100</b>
<b>The funds of the charity:</b>					
	16a				
Restricted income funds			<b>3,283</b>		10,000
Unrestricted income funds:					
General funds		<b>855,584</b>		829,100	
			<u>855,584</u>	<u>829,100</u>	
Total unrestricted funds			<b>855,584</b>		<b>829,100</b>
<b>Total charity funds</b>			<b>858,867</b>		<b>839,100</b>

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 31 October 2023 and signed on their behalf by

Nicholas Hillier  
Chair of Trustees

## Science Media Centre

### Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 March 2023

	2023		2022	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>				
Net income for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	19,767		30,921	
Loss/(Gain) on investments	1,734		(10,234)	
Interest from investments	(3,092)		(82)	
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(68,200)		11,981	
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(23,914)		15,828	
<b>Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities</b>		<b>(73,705)</b>		<b>48,414</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities:</b>				
Interest from investments	3,092		82	
Purchase of investments	-		(100,000)	
<b>Net cash provided by / (used in) investing activities</b>		<b>3,092</b>		<b>(99,918)</b>
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>		<b>(70,613)</b>		<b>(51,504)</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		<b>666,423</b>		<b>717,927</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>		<b>595,810</b>		<b>666,423</b>

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

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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 £859,094 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:

**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 2023

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

	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
Donations and gifts	492,847	408,308
Grants receivable for core activities	93,000	75,000
<b>Government grants:</b>		
UK Research & Innovation	95,000	95,000
Food Standards Agency	10,000	10,000
National Institute for Clinical Excellence	5,000	5,000
National Institute for Health Research	10,000	9,000
Sellafield Sites	5,000	5,000
Genomics England	6,000	4,000
Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency	-	5,000
National Nuclear Laboratory	-	2,500
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust	7,500	7,500
United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority	-	4,000
Met Office	-	3,000
Donated services	-	10,000
	<b>724,327</b>	<b>643,308</b>

All income from donations is unrestricted.

3 Income from charitable activities

	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
COVID-19 Vaccine Media Hub	-	28,657
Global SMCs Coordinator	25,000	-
Changing roles of science press officers – market research	-	10,000
Total income from charitable activities	<b>25,000</b>	<b>38,657</b>

All income from charitable activities is restricted.

4 Income from investments

	2023 £	2022 £
Interest	3,092	82
	<b>3,092</b>	<b>82</b>

All income from investments is unrestricted.

Science Media Centre

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

5a Analysis of expenditure (current year)

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Governance costs £	Support costs	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
Staff costs (Note 7)	38,505	474,596	-	-	513,101	512,344
Event costs	-	31,595	-	-	31,595	11,297
Premises costs	-	-	-	42,778	42,778	36,998
Office costs	-	-	13	53,606	53,619	38,929
Travel, meetings and subsistence	-	-	178	38,352	38,530	3,897
Insurance	-	-	-	12,243	12,243	10,916
Professional fees	-	19,013	-	-	19,013	28,155
Accountancy	-	-	3,426	12,287	15,713	14,816
Independent examiner's fee	-	-	4,140	-	4,140	3,780
Bank charges	-	-	-	186	186	228
	<b>38,505</b>	<b>525,204</b>	<b>7,757</b>	<b>159,452</b>	<b>730,918</b>	<b>661,360</b>
Governance costs	388	7,369	(7,757)	-	-	-
Support costs	7,973	151,479	-	(159,452)	-	-
<b>Total expenditure 2022</b>	<b>46,865</b>	<b>684,053</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>730,918</b>	



Science Media Centre

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

5b Analysis of expenditure (prior year)

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Governance costs £	Support costs	2022 Total £
Staff costs (Note 7)	36,580	475,764	-	-	512,344
Event costs	-	11,297	-	-	11,297
Premises costs	-	-	-	36,998	36,998
Office costs	-	-	13	38,916	38,929
Travel, meetings and subsistence	-	-	237	3,660	3,897
Insurance	-	-	-	10,916	10,916
Professional fees	-	18,155	10,000	-	28,155
Accountancy	-	-	1,890	12,926	14,816
Independent examiner's fee	-	-	3,780	-	3,780
Bank charges	-	-	-	228	228
	<b>36,580</b>	<b>505,216</b>	<b>15,920</b>	<b>103,644</b>	<b>661,360</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>

**6 Net income / (expenditure) for the year**

Independent Examiner's Fee (excluding VAT):		
Independent Examination	3,450	3,150
Other services	1,750	1,575
	<u>5,200</u>	<u>4,725</u>

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

Staff costs were as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Salaries and wages	433,007	435,585
Social security costs	45,170	44,180
Employer's contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	34,924	32,579
	<u>513,101</u>	<u>512,344</u>

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

	2023 No.	2022 No.
£60,000 – £69,999	1	1
£100,000–£109,999	1	1
	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>

The total employee benefits (including pension contributions and employer's national insurance) of the key management personnel were £321,192 (2022: £255,217).

The charity trustees were neither paid nor received any other benefits from employment with the charity in the year (2022: £nil). No charity trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2022: £nil).

Trustees' expenses represents the payment or reimbursement of travel and subsistence costs totalling £178 (2022: £237) incurred by 4 (2022: 2) 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 (2022: 10).

**9 Related party transactions**

There were no related party transactions in the year (2022: £10,000)

**10 Taxation**

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

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

11 Listed investments

	2023 £	2022 £
Fair value at the start of the year	171,452	61,218
Additions at cost	–	100,000
Net (loss)/gain on change in fair value	(1,734)	10,234
	<u>169,718</u>	<u>171,452</u>

Investments comprise:

	2023 £	2022 £
UK Common investment funds	169,718	171,452
	<u>169,718</u>	<u>171,452</u>

12 Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade debtors	118,084	52,501
Other debtors	4,715	4,894
Prepayments	14,760	11,964
	<u>137,559</u>	<u>69,359</u>

13 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade creditors	9,731	15,791
Taxation and social security	12,643	19,030
Accruals	21,846	33,313
	<u>44,220</u>	<u>68,134</u>

14 Deferred income

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

	2023 £	2022 £
Balance at the beginning of the year	–	28,657
Amount released to income in the year	–	(28,657)
Amount deferred in the year	–	–
	<u>–</u>	<u>–</u>

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

	General unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total funds £
Investments	169,718	–	169,718
Net current assets	685,866	3,283	689,149
<b>Net assets at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>855,584</b>	<b>3,283</b>	<b>858,867</b>

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

	General unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total funds £
Tangible fixed assets	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>

## 16a Movements in funds (current year)

	At 1 April 2022 £	Income & gains £	Expenditure & losses £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2023 £
<b>Restricted funds:</b>					
Global SMCs Coordinator	–	25,000	(21,717)	–	3,283
Changing roles of science press officers – market research	10,000	–	(10,000)	–	–
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>(31,717)</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>3,283</b>
<b>Unrestricted funds:</b>					
<b>General funds</b>	<b>829,100</b>	<b>727,419</b>	<b>(700,935)</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>855,584</b>
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>829,100</b>	<b>727,419</b>	<b>(700,935)</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>855,584</b>
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>839,100</b>	<b>752,419</b>	<b>(732,652)</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>858,867</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 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>	-	38,657	(28,657)	-	10,000
<b>Unrestricted funds:</b>					
<b>General funds</b>	808,179	643,624	(622,703)	-	829,100
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	808,179	643,624	(622,703)	-	829,100
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>808,179</b>	<b>682,281</b>	<b>(651,360)</b>	-	<b>839,100</b>

**Purposes of restricted funds**

**Global SMCs Coordinator**

To fund the post Global Coordinator to support the network of Science Media Centres around the world.

**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.