

Company number: 07560997

Charity Number: 1140827

# Science Media Centre

Report and financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

# Science Media Centre

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### For the year ended 31 March 2024

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## Science Media Centre

### Reference and administrative information

For the year ended 31 March 2024

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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
Amanda Borton	Treasurer
John Davidson	
Prof Kevin McConway	
Jonathan Brüün	
Alex Keenlyside	
Alice Henschley	
Joanne Manning	
Richard Fisher	Appointed 31 October 2023
Prof Azra Ghani	Appointed 31 October 2023
Karen Chadwick	Resigned 31 October 2023

<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 2024

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<b>Bankers</b>	HSBC Bank PLC 16 King Street Covent Garden London WC2E 8JF
	CCLA Senator House 85 Queen Victoria Street London EC4V 4ET
<b>Solicitors</b>	Bristows LLP 100 Victoria Embankment London EC4Y 0DH
<b>Independent examiner</b>	Fleur Holden Sayer Vincent LLP Chartered Accountants 110 Golden Lane LONDON EC1Y 0TG

The trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

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 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 2024 is the SMC's thirteenth year as a fully independent organisation, but also its twenty second 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

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<sup>1</sup> Wellcome Trust Monitor Report Wave 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)

2015<sup>3</sup>. The most recent survey of its kind reported high levels of public trust that scientists (74%), engineers (85%), and doctors (85%) tell the truth<sup>4</sup>.

The Science Media Centre recently commissioned Ipsos to conduct a poll about where the British public gets their information from about science<sup>5</sup>. The results suggested that British adults are more likely to get information about science from traditional news media than from social media (with TV news being the biggest source (52%), and non-newspaper online news outlets such as BBC News, ITN and Sky News also being a significant source (34%)). A similar number of participants cited national newspapers and social media as sources of science information (30%). On delving into the origin of science information seen on social media, traditional news media outlets was the most common source (50%), and even some of those who had said they didn't typically get science information from the news media actually went on to cite it as the source of what they were seeing on social media, suggesting news journalism still has significant reach including to many of those people who only look on social media.

As such working with the mainstream news media 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.

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.

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

<sup>4</sup> Veracity Index 2023, Ipsos MORI survey of trust in professions

<sup>5</sup> 'Summary report – Ipsos survey on science and the media' 2024, Science Media Centre

## 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.

Staff are the main resource of the SMC and five permanent 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. This year we have also created a new role, for a trainee press officer, who will join the SMC on a year traineeship to learn about press work, with the idea being to have a new trainee each year. Additionally, we have continued the Global Coordinator role that is dedicated to working with the global network of SMCs, and forging links with people and scientific societies worldwide to inform other countries about the SMC model.

## 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 Telegraph on a controversial science subject, give an interview for ITV news on a breaking news story, or speak to a journalist at the Mail on Sunday 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 47 press briefings. We sent out 378 roundups and rapid reactions. This is on par with other average years excluding 2019–2020, 2020–21, and 2021–22, which were unusually high due to 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 the Baltimore bridge collapse, a measles outbreak in the UK in early 2024, various outbreaks of bird flu globally, the volcanic eruption in Iceland, the bed bug situation in London and Paris in 2023, government announcements on a phased ban of smoking and plans to rejoin the HORIZON research programme, the heatwaves and wildfires in summer 2023, news reports that the first baby was born using mitochondrial replacement therapy, new drug trial announcements for Alzheimer's disease, 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 qualified, 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 the association between progestogen hormones and brain tumour risk, or erectile dysfunction drugs and Alzheimer's disease, and epigenetic changes in smokers and vapers and cancer risk. It could also involve responding to studies on commonly taken medications or novel tests, where inaccurate reporting could lead to people being

misinformed of the benefits and risks of these drugs and tests, such as a roundup on a biomarker test for Alzheimer's disease, a preventative antibody for RSV in infants, or off-target effects in mRNA vaccines. 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 sea sponge data reporting that we've passed 1.5 degrees of industrial-era warming, or a modelling study suggesting the Atlantic Ocean Circulation (AMOC) could be on course to collapse.

### *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. In 2023/2024 we had an average attendance of 17 journalists from national news outlets attend our media briefings.

We have run briefings on significant new reports and papers on the evidence of important headline issues of the day such as a report on blood tests for Alzheimer's disease, invasive alien species, a new study on how air pollution causes lung cancer, an independent review into equity in medical devices, and the Chief Medical Officers' report on air 'health in an ageing society'. 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 influenza, weight loss drugs, ultra-processed foods, carbon capture & storage and carbon dioxide removal, and wastewater release from the Fukushima power plant.

### *Additional services*

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

The SMC also organised two Introduction to the News Media events in 2023/2024, which are seminars devised and refined over our twenty year history aimed at persuading the best scientists of the case for engaging with the media. The first event in 2023/24 was held in collaboration with University College London (UCL) on 20 September 2023, and was attended by 117 scientists and

press officers. The second event was held in collaboration with the University of Sheffield on 5 March 2024, and was attended by 150 scientists and press officers.

On Wednesday 17 January 2024 the SMC hosted a two-hour session on statistics for science, health and environment journalists. The session was conceived and organised by the SMC and delivered by Prof Sir David Spiegelhalter – covering common statistical concepts science journalists come across day-to-day in press releases and scientific papers such as statistical significance, p-values, confidence intervals, odds ratios, confounding factors, and association versus causation. The session was attended by over 40 news journalists, and feedback was positive – we intend to run this session again in 2024/25.

### 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. 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. The SMC also carried out an update of the labelling system for press releases for health and medical research, which the SMC developed back in 2018 with the Academy of Medical Sciences. The aim of the labelling system is to help journalists see at a glance the nature and significance of the new study, and to help press officers who sometimes find themselves dealing with scientists who are a little 'over-excited' about their findings – with the aim of being a nudge in the direction of proportionate and accurate coverage.

### 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 National Institute for Health Research Health Protection Unit in Emergency Preparedness and Response. Fiona Lethbridge is sitting on the Advisory Board of the Maria Leptin EMBO Science Journalism Fellowships. Freya Robb and Ed Day are both Stempra committee members.

The SMC commissioned Ipsos to conduct a poll about where the British public get their information about science, which was published by the SMC in November 2023. This was partly to ask again some questions we'd asked in 2002 when we opened (to keep abreast of changes in where the public accesses science information), as well as to explore what it means when people say they get information from social media (what the sources actually are), and to explore whether and why the public trusts scientists. Details of the results of the survey can be seen in the SMC's press release<sup>6</sup> and summary report<sup>7</sup>.

The SMC also submitted written evidence focussing on public understanding and scientists engaging with the media, to the House of Lords Committee on Food, Diet and Obesity's inquiry, Food, Diet and Obesity, which was subsequently published<sup>8</sup> in May 2024.

## Fundraising

The year 2023–24 ended with a surplus of £8,487 (2023: £19,767). The SMC feels its fundraising is still very effective and there is no reduction in the goodwill or support from funders.

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.

For the first time in September 2023 an event exclusively for funders of the SMC was held. Sir Patrick Vallance spoke on issues affecting the wider community and Fiona Fox highlighted to funders the activities the SMC had carried out using their funding. Feedback was positive and we intend to repeat the event in 2024.

## 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.

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<sup>6</sup> 'News media a bigger source of science information than social media', Science Media Centre press release

<sup>7</sup> 'Summary report – Ipsos survey on science and the media', Science Media Centre

<sup>8</sup> Science Media Centre – Written Evidence (FDO0025)

This year felt like a full 'return to normal' after the COVID-19 pandemic, with lingering media interest in the big studies on longer-term consequences of the virus and the pandemic, such as long COVID, but at lower levels of coverage than seen previously. There has been a continued appetite for other stories, and two of the big topics of the year have been the debate around the potential health impacts of ultra-processed foods (UPFs), and the effects of weight loss drugs for obesity, both of which the SMC organised background briefings on, with some top experts in these fields giving the journalists an overview on the state of research. Other topics of significance have been outbreaks of H5N1 avian influenza in animals, artificial intelligence, climate change, vaping, and mental health. These are all ongoing issues for the SMC and so we are already well acquainted with the top experts in these fields and how to advise scientists engaging with the media.

## 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 have now begun refreshing our expert database with scientists and engineers across a range of key topic areas for the SMC, including mental health, dementia, diet and nutrition, climate, cancer and energy. We have sought out those researchers doing impressive work at some of the best universities and research institutions who will be the scientific leaders of the future. This is an important ongoing process which will ensure our database does not become stale and reflects a true diversity of scientists who are among the very best of the mainstream scientific community.

## 3. Conferences

We have begun to look more closely at media reporting of scientific conferences. It is common that work presented at scientific conferences is at a very early stage and typically pre-publication. It is also common for this work to be heavily publicised to the media, without data being made available for journalists and 3rd party scientists to properly scrutinise the claims. While conferences provide an important part of scientific discussion and debate for scientists in attendance, there are potential risks to public understanding. The SMC has begun a project to speak with those involved in press work on conferences, conference organisers, journalists and scientists to seek their views on conference comms. The SMC will use this information to guide our activity in supporting accurate coverage of scientific conferences.

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

This year we stepped up our work on AI in response to the increased media interest following the launch of ChatGPT. We have developed relationships with press officers in key research organizations including The Alan Turing Institute and The Ada Lovelace Institute, and AI-focused university departments, recruiting many of their top experts to our database. We have used these contacts to secure speaking arrangements at AI events such as the UK AI conference, and at departmental meetings such as the Surrey Institute for People-Centred Artificial Intelligence, further increasing our connections with the top AI scientists and encouraging them to engage with the media. We subsequently used these connections to organize a meeting with relevant press

officers, scientists, and other interested contacts, to discuss/learn more about the state of AI research, the media coverage of AI, and future points of potential contention.

This work has put the SMC in better stead to respond to new studies and breaking developments on AI, with examples in the past year being AI in the health space: for diagnosing heart attacks, mammography screening, and answering patient questions, and reactions to various statements on the potential existential risks of AI. We also organized a media briefing with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) on their announcement of £50 million of funding to develop trustworthy and secure AI, with four of the recipients of the funding explaining the research they intend to perform.

## 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 2023–24 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.

### Transactions and financial position

In its thirteenth year of operation as a fully independent organisation, the SMC has continued to maintain a good financial position.

The Statement of Financial Activities shows that the total income for the year was £804,885 (£752,419 in 2022–23).

Total expenditure for the year was £796,398 (£730,918 in 2022–23) of which 94% (94% in 2022–23) was spent on charitable activities directly carrying out the Charity's key objectives.

The activities for the year therefore resulted in a surplus of £8,487 (£19,767 surplus in 2022–23). This includes £20,684 gain (£1,734 loss in 2022–23) on investments.

## Investment policy

As at 31 March 2024, the SMC has approximately £190,000 invested for growth. This level is kept under review by the board of trustees.

## 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, conflicts of interest, cybersecurity, the loss of data, our reputation, staffing 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 editorial 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. A further review of the policy is planned for early in the next period. 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 upkeep 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 £750,000 for this period).

The Charity holds £867,354 in reserves as of 31 March 2024 (2023: £858,867). On this basis the Trustees are satisfied the SMC is a going concern.

Our year end fund position is in excess of our £750,000 reserves target. The Trustees feel that it is prudent to hold a slightly higher level of reserves as a deficit budget has been planned for 2024–25.

Trustees periodically review the reserves policy of the Charity.

## Plans for the future

The current period has seen the SMC's thirteenth 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. Conferences

This year we will continue to look more closely at media reporting of scientific conferences. The SMC will 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.

3. Pilot SMC for Ireland

As part of the development of a global network of Science Media Centres, the Global SMCs Coordinator and UK SMC Chief Executive initiated a project to explore the appetite for an All-Ireland Science Media Centre. This took the form of a consultation with key representatives of the science and media community in Ireland. The consultation<sup>9</sup> provided general support and enthusiasm for such a project and resulted in a plan for a one-year pilot SMC for Ireland – a feasibility project – to start work in June 2024. As such, this year the UK SMC will be heavily

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<sup>9</sup> 'An All-Ireland SMC – Consultation Report', Science Media Centre



involved in and support the running and success of the pilot, including in the training of the member of staff recruited to run the pilot SMC for Ireland.

#### 4. Social sciences project

The SMC will do some focused work on how we work with social scientists and how social scientists are used in the media on topics that we work on. This work will include meetings with key organisations within the social sciences such as the Campbell Collaboration, The British Academy, The Academy of Social Sciences, Leverhulme Centre for Demographic Science, and UK in a Changing Europe to understand more about the different disciplines that make up the social sciences and discuss if the SMC should try and recruit these experts to the expert database and seek their commentary on new research and as experts on media panels. The purpose of this project is not to change the stories or research that the SMC works on but in those stories where social science expertise can really help a journalist cover a story accurately, and seek their expertise in addition to experts in the medical, engineering and natural sciences.

## 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 in 2022. 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

## Science Media Centre

### Trustees' annual report

#### For the year ended 31 March 2024

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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 Advisory 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 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 three Trustees, including Treasurer, and two 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 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
Amanda Borton	Treasurer
John Davidson	
Prof Kevin McConway	
Jonathan Brüün	
Alex Keenlyside	
Alice Henchley	
Joanne Manning	
Richard Fisher	Appointed 31 October 2023
Prof Azra Ghani	Appointed 31 October 2023
Karen Chadwick	Resigned 31 October 2023

#### 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

Trustees' annual report

For the year ended 31 March 2024

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The SMC has ten 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 ten interns who each spent five weeks 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 room for progression. Benchmarking is conducted every two years to ensure the salary bands are comparable to similar roles outside the SMC. The Remuneration Committee recommends changes to salary bands based on affordability, wider economic circumstances and the financial performance of the SMC. The Board of Trustees considers salary band recommendations and makes final decisions on updating salary bands. Managers decide staff progression through salary bands based on annual performance reviews. The Remuneration Committee acts as a sounding board for the Chief Executive to discuss staff performance.

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, health and dental insurance, ability to buy or sell leave, gym membership and membership of professional-body 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.

In 2022 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

Trustees' annual report

For the year ended 31 March 2024

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- 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 2024 was 10 (2022:9). 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 23 October 2024 and signed on their behalf by

Nicholas Hillier  
Chair of Trustees

## Science Media Centre

### Funders list

#### For the year ended 31 March 2024

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##### **£2,000 and under**

Association of Medical Research Charities  
Bipolar UK  
British Antarctic Survey  
British Ecological Society  
British Soft Drinks Association  
Institute of Physics & Engineering in Medicine  
Kainos  
Keele University  
Lancaster University  
National Nuclear Laboratory  
New England Journal of Medicine  
Society for Radiological Protection  
The Times  
University of Exeter  
University of Portsmouth  
University of Reading  
University of Surrey  
University of York

##### **£2,001 – £4,999**

Alan Turing Institute  
Alzheimer's Research UK  
BASF  
Biochemical Society  
Biogen  
British Pharmacological Society  
British Society of Immunology  
Covestro UK Ltd  
Cystic Fibrosis Trust  
Earlham Institute  
European College of Neuropsychopharmacology  
Food & Drink Federation  
FoodDrinkEurope  
Health Data Research UK (HDRUK)  
Institute of Cancer Research  
Institute of Physics  
John Innes Centre  
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine  
Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency  
Microbiology Society  
Motor Neurone Disease Association  
Nuclear Industry Association  
Quadram Institute Bioscience  
Queen Mary University of London  
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health  
Royal Society  
Sainsbury Laboratory  
Taylor & Francis  
UK Biobank  
UK Dementia Research Institute  
University of East Anglia  
University of Glasgow  
University of Leeds  
University of Leicester  
University of Manchester  
University of Sheffield  
University of Nottingham  
Wellcome Sanger Institute

## Science Media Centre

### Funders list

#### For the year ended 31 March 2024

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##### **£5,000 – £9,999**

AbbVie Ltd  
Academy of Medical Sciences  
Applied Microbiology International  
Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry  
BioIndustry Association  
BP International  
Chemical Industries Association  
Cochrane Collaboration  
Durham University  
Genomics England  
Gilead Sciences  
Institution of Engineering and Technology  
King's College London  
LifeArc  
National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence  
National Physical Laboratory  
Nestle UK Ltd  
Nutrition Society  
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust  
Queen's University Belfast  
Rolls-Royce plc  
Royal Academy of Engineering  
Royal College of Psychiatrists  
Shionogi  
UK Centre of Ecology & Hydrology  
University of Birmingham  
University of Cambridge  
University of Edinburgh  
University of Oxford

##### **£10,000 – £19,999**

Abbott  
British Heart Foundation  
Cancer Research UK  
Elsevier  
Financial Times  
Food Standards Agency  
Government Office for Science  
Imperial College London  
Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD)  
Moderna  
National Institute for Health Research  
Orsted (UK) Ltd  
Pfizer  
University College London

##### **£20,000 – £35,000**

Gatsby Charitable Foundation  
GlaxoSmithKline  
Springer Nature Ltd

##### **Over £35,000**

UK Research & Innovation  
Wellcome Trust

## Independent examiner's report

To the trustees of

Science Media Centre

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I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Science Media Centre for the year ended 31 March 2024.

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, 110 Golden Lane, London, EC1Y 0TG

Date: 30 October 2024

Science Media Centre

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

For the year ended 31 March 2024

		2024			2023		
	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £
<b>Income from:</b>							
Donations	2	751,749	–	<b>751,749</b>	724,327	–	724,327
Charitable activities	3	–	21,500	<b>21,500</b>	–	25,000	25,000
Investments	4	10,952	–	<b>10,952</b>	3,092	–	3,092
<b>Total income</b>		<b>762,701</b>	<b>21,500</b>	<b>784,201</b>	<b>727,419</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>752,419</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>							
Raising funds	5	48,596	–	<b>48,596</b>	46,865	–	46,865
Charitable activities	5	723,019	24,783	<b>747,802</b>	652,336	31,717	684,053
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>771,615</b>	<b>24,783</b>	<b>796,398</b>	<b>699,201</b>	<b>31,717</b>	<b>730,918</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure) before net gains / (losses) on investments</b>		<b>(8,914)</b>	<b>(3,283)</b>	<b>(12,197)</b>	<b>28,218</b>	<b>(6,717)</b>	<b>21,501</b>
Net gains / (losses) on investments		20,684	–	<b>20,684</b>	(1,734)	–	(1,734)
<b>Net income / (expenditure) for the year</b>	6	<b>11,770</b>	<b>(3,283)</b>	<b>8,487</b>	<b>26,484</b>	<b>(6,717)</b>	<b>19,767</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>							
Total funds brought forward		855,584	3,283	<b>858,867</b>	829,100	10,000	839,100
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>867,354</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>867,354</b>	<b>855,584</b>	<b>3,283</b>	<b>858,867</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 15a to the financial statements.

Science Media Centre

Balance sheet

Company no. 07560997

As at 31 March 2024

	Note	£	2024 £	£	2023 £
<b>Fixed assets:</b>					
Investments	11		190,402		169,718
			<u>190,402</u>		<u>169,718</u>
<b>Current assets:</b>					
Debtors	12	96,100		137,559	
Cash at bank and in hand		621,532		595,810	
		<u>717,632</u>		<u>733,369</u>	
<b>Liabilities:</b>					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	(40,680)		(44,220)	
				<u>676,952</u>	<u>689,149</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>					
<b>Total net assets</b>			<u><u>867,354</u></u>		<u><u>858,867</u></u>
<b>The funds of the charity:</b>	15a				
Restricted income funds			-		3,283
Unrestricted income funds:					
General funds		867,354		855,584	
		<u>867,354</u>		<u>855,584</u>	
Total unrestricted funds			<u>867,354</u>		<u>855,584</u>
<b>Total charity funds</b>			<u><u>867,354</u></u>		<u><u>858,867</u></u>

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

The directors acknowledge the following responsibilities:

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

Approved by the trustees on 23 October 2024 and signed on their behalf by

Nicholas Hillier  
Chair of Trustees

## Science Media Centre

### Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 March 2024

	2024		2023	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>				
Net (expenditure)/income for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	8,487		19,767	
(Gain)/loss on investments	(20,684)		1,734	
Interest from investments	(10,952)		(3,092)	
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	41,459		(68,200)	
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	(3,540)		(23,914)	
<b>Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities</b>	<b>14,770</b>		<b>(73,705)</b>	
<b>Cash flows from investing activities:</b>				
Interest from investments	10,952		3,092	
<b>Net cash provided by investing activities</b>	<b>10,952</b>		<b>3,092</b>	
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>	<b>25,722</b>		<b>(70,613)</b>	
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	595,810		666,423	
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	<b>621,532</b>		<b>595,810</b>	

## 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 £867,354 (2023: £858,867) which is in excess of our reserves target.

### e) Income

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

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

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

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

### f) Fund accounting

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

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

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

### g) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

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

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

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

### h) 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

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

1 Accounting policies (continued)

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. 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

	2024	2023
	£	£
Donations and gifts	494,249	492,847
Grants receivable for core activities	103,000	93,000
<b>Government grants:</b>		
UK Research & Innovation (UKRI)	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	10,000
Sellafield Sites	-	5,000
Genomics England	6,000	6,000
Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency	3,000	-
National Nuclear Laboratory	2,000	-
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust	7,500	7,500
Government Office for Science	10,000	-
British Antarctic Survey	1,000	-
National Physical Laboratory	5,000	-
	<u>751,749</u>	<u>724,327</u>

All income from donations is unrestricted.

3 Income from charitable activities

	2024	2023
	£	£
Global SMCs Coordinator	15,000	25,000
Pilot SMC for Ireland	6,500	-
Total income from charitable activities	<u>21,500</u>	<u>25,000</u>

All income from charitable activities is restricted.

4 Income from investments

	2024	2023
	£	£
Interest	10,952	3,092
	<u>10,952</u>	<u>3,092</u>

All income from investments is unrestricted.

Science Media Centre

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

5a Analysis of expenditure (current year)

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Governance costs £	Support costs £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Staff costs (Note 7)	41,090	547,710	–	–	<b>588,800</b>	513,101
Event costs	–	23,513	–	–	<b>23,513</b>	31,595
Premises costs	–	–	–	43,065	<b>43,065</b>	42,778
Office costs	–	–	13	59,188	<b>59,201</b>	53,619
Travel, meetings and subsistence	–	–	351	12,619	<b>12,970</b>	38,530
Insurance	–	–	–	13,586	<b>13,586</b>	12,243
Professional fees	–	33,957	–	–	<b>33,957</b>	19,013
Accountancy	–	–	1,434	15,154	<b>16,588</b>	15,713
Independent examiner's fee	–	–	4,440	–	<b>4,440</b>	4,140
Bank charges	–	–	–	278	<b>278</b>	186
	<b>41,090</b>	<b>605,180</b>	<b>6,238</b>	<b>143,890</b>	<b>796,398</b>	<b>730,918</b>
Governance costs	312	5,926	(6,238)	–	–	–
Support costs	7,195	136,696	–	(143,890)	–	–
<b>Total expenditure 2024</b>	<b>48,596</b>	<b>747,802</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>796,398</b>	

Science Media Centre

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

5b Analysis of expenditure (previous year)

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Governance costs £	Support costs £	2023 Total £
Staff costs (Note 7)	38,505	474,596	-	-	513,101
Event costs	-	31,595	-	-	31,595
Premises costs	-	-	-	42,778	42,778
Office costs	-	-	13	53,606	53,619
Travel, meetings and subsistence	-	-	178	38,352	38,530
Insurance	-	-	-	12,243	12,243
Professional fees	-	19,013	-	-	19,013
Accountancy	-	-	3,426	12,287	15,713
Independent examiner's fee	-	-	4,140	-	4,140
Bank charges	-	-	-	186	186
	<u>38,505</u>	<u>525,204</u>	<u>7,757</u>	<u>159,452</u>	<u>730,918</u>
Governance costs	388	7,369	(7,757)	-	-
Support costs	7,973	151,479	-	(159,452)	-
	<u>46,865</u>	<u>684,053</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>730,918</u>



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

	2024	2023
	£	£
Independent Examiner's Fee (excluding VAT):		
Independent Examination	3,700	3,450
Other services	1,850	1,750
	<u>5,550</u>	<u>5,200</u>

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

Staff costs were as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Salaries and wages	496,694	433,007
Social security costs	53,923	45,170
Employer's contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	38,183	34,924
	<u>588,800</u>	<u>513,101</u>

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

	2024	2023
	No.	No.
£60,000 – £69,999	1	1
£100,000–£109,999	–	1
£110,000–£119,999	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 £347,679 (2023: £321,192).

The charity trustees were neither paid nor received any other benefits from employment with the charity in the year (2023: £nil). No charity trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2023: £nil).

Trustees' expenses represents the payment or reimbursement of travel and subsistence costs totalling £351 (2023: £178) incurred by 4 (2023: 4) 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 11 (2023: 10).

**9 Related party transactions**

There were no related party transactions in the year (2023: £nil).

**10 Taxation**

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

**11 Listed investments**

	2024 £	2023 £
Fair value at the start of the year	169,718	171,452
Additions at cost	–	–
Net gain/(loss) on change in fair value	20,684	(1,734)
Fair value at the end of the year	<u>190,402</u>	<u>169,718</u>

Investments comprise:

	2024 £	2023 £
UK Common investment funds	190,402	169,718
	<u>190,402</u>	<u>169,718</u>

**12 Debtors**

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	75,326	118,084
Other debtors	4,993	4,715
Prepayments	15,781	14,760
	<u>96,100</u>	<u>137,559</u>

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

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	8,731	9,731
Taxation and social security	14,369	12,643
Accruals	17,580	21,846
	<u>40,680</u>	<u>44,220</u>

14a Analysis of net assets between funds (current year)

	General unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total funds £
Investments	190,402	–	190,402
Net current assets	676,952	–	676,952
<b>Net assets at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>867,354</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>867,354</b>

14b Analysis of net assets between funds (prior year)

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

15a Movements in funds (current year)

	At 1 April 2023 £	Income & gains £	Expenditure & losses £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2024 £
<b>Restricted funds:</b>					
Global SMCs Coordinator	3,283	15,000	(18,283)	–	–
Pilot SMC for Ireland	–	6,500	(6,500)	–	–
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<b>3,283</b>	<b>21,500</b>	<b>(24,783)</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>
<b>Unrestricted funds:</b>					
<b>General funds</b>	<b>855,584</b>	<b>783,385</b>	<b>(771,615)</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>867,354</b>
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>855,584</b>	<b>783,385</b>	<b>(771,615)</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>867,354</b>
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>858,867</b>	<b>804,885</b>	<b>(796,398)</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>867,354</b>

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

## 15b Movements in funds (prior year)

	At 1 April 2022 £	Income & gains £	Expenditure & losses £	Transfers £	At 1 April 2023 £
<b>Restricted funds:</b>					
Global SMCs Coordinator	–	25,000	(21,717)	–	<b>3,283</b>
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>	829,100	727,419	(700,935)	–	<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>

**Purposes of restricted funds****Global SMCs Coordinator**

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

**Pilot SMC for Ireland**

To investigate the feasibility of a Science Media Centre for Ireland, together with Airfield Estate Dublin.

**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.

## 16 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.