

Public Engagement at STFC



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Public Engagement at STFC Rutherford Appleton Laboratory



- Introduction to Public Engagement at STFC
- Local engagement at RAL
- National engagement

Science and Technology Facilities Council

STFC's mission is to deliver world-leading national and international research and innovation capabilities and, through those, discover the secrets of the Universe.

- We support research in astronomy, particle physics and nuclear physics
- We fund UK participation in large international collaborations
- We operate world-class research facilities for the UK

ESS

ESRF

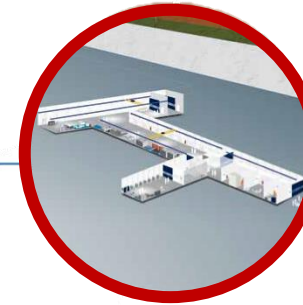
LHC

ILL

UK Astronomy Technology Centre
Edinburgh, Scotland



Boulby Underground Laboratory
Cleveland



Rutherford Appleton Laboratory
Didcot, Oxfordshire



Chilbolton Observatory
Stockbridge, Hampshire

Daresbury Laboratory
Warrington, Cheshire



Polaris House
Swindon, Wiltshire



STFC Public Engagement Strategy



Our Vision

A society that values and participates in scientific endeavour.

Our Mission

Using our stories, community and facilities to inspire and involve people with our science and technology.

We are both funders and practitioners.

Our aims

1 Showcase STFC science and technology

Using our facilities, stories and community to inspire

2 Build the right partnerships

Improving our reach and impact

3 Develop and support STEM influencers

Creating a network of people passionate about STEM

4 Improving our reach with diverse audiences

A focus on Wonder communities – the 40% most deprived areas of the UK

5 Delivering high quality activities

Making an impact on our audiences



Wonder Initiative

Science capital is science-related knowledge, experience values and attitude. With low science capital, young people are less interested in science careers.

We strive to grow science capital for underserved groups. Those from areas of high deprivation often have low science capital.

Wonder aims to increase engagement from the 40% most deprived areas in the UK, particularly those aged 8-14 and their families with STFC's work.



Local Engagement: Public and Communities

- Sharing our amazing stories, work and facilities
- Going out into the community
- Partnerships are essential in everything we do

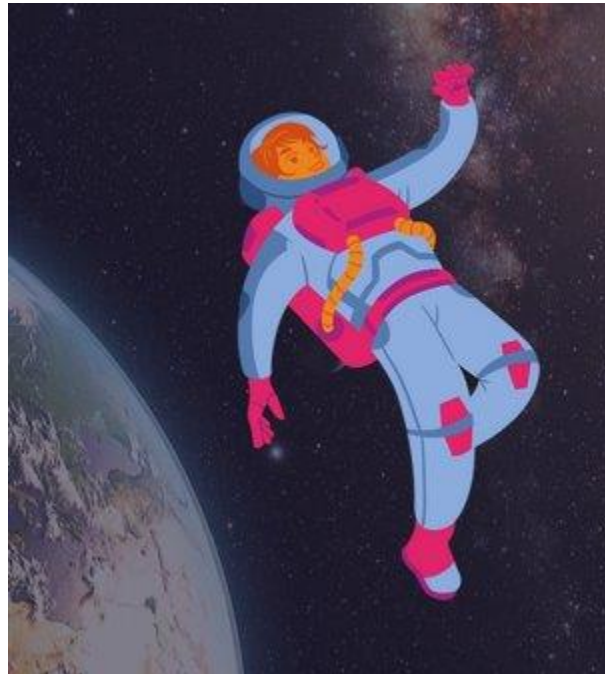
Glow Your Own

- 6 online workshops
- 2 in-person community events
- ~200 participants
- *"I made it work for the first time without Mummy!"*



Local Engagement: Teachers

- All of our local teacher engagement is through partnerships with local teaching organisations
 - Computing at School
 - Science Learning Partnership
 - Association of Science



Local Engagement: Schools

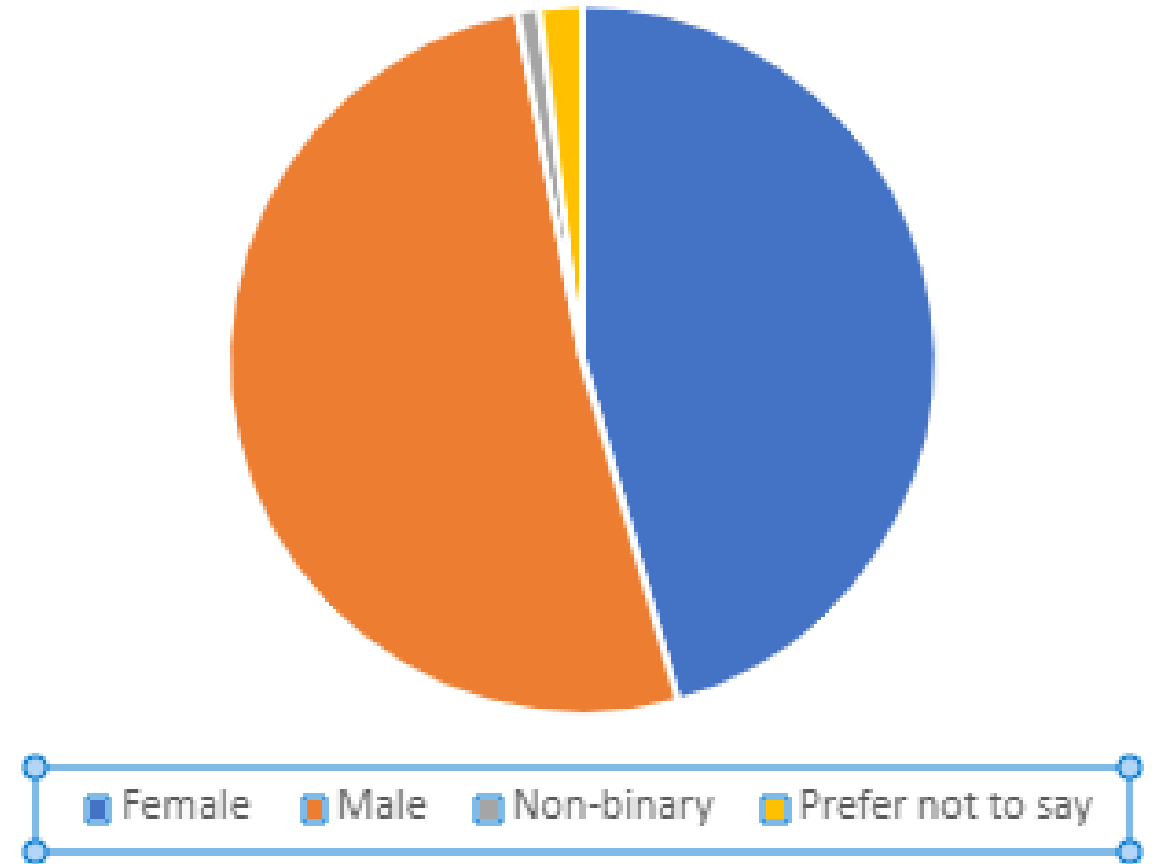
- Hybrid programme
 - Events on site
 - Events at schools
 - Events online
- Multi-intervention projects, co-created with key partner schools
- 47% engagement with Wonder Schools in 2022



Local & National: Work Experience at DL and RAL 2022

- 90 online student placements from 732 applications
- 17 webinars – reaching 177 students, with 471 live webinar views
- Excellent outcomes:
 - Average satisfaction 4.8/5
 - 100% felt welcome, able to join in and inspired
- *“Getting to work with an expert in the field and conducting real science.”*
- *“I struggle massively with social anxiety and being so encouraged and expected to contribute allowed me to develop myself in that area quite quickly.”*
- Return to in-person placements in 2023: 160 placements from 1000 applications

Placed Students: RAL 2022/23



James Webb Space Telescope: A national campaign



Vision: A society which is engaged with the UK's contribution to the JWST mission as a source of pride and inspiration and as a springboard for participation in STEM.

Mission: To promote, facilitate and support a campaign of public engagement activity across the UK which draws on the UK's contribution to the JWST mission and those involved with it to inspire and engage audiences of all ages.

James Webb Space Telescope: Planned Partnerships

- Webb organisations, scientists and engineers
- Informal learning: encourage and support
 - Planetaria
 - Science centres
 - Astronomical societies
- Formal learning: develop and deliver
 - Primary schools
 - Secondary schools
 - STEM clubs



James Webb Space Telescope: A national campaign

- Direct reach of over 300,000
- **Partnership work: co-creation and collaboration**
- Input of researchers at the start: not just an add-on
- Cross-pollination of resources across networks
- Putting participants at the heart of the engagement: what is their motivation?



It was like the pupils had collective ownership – they saw the space telescope as being theirs and talked about the mission as though they were part of it. (Teacher, interview)



What is the change we want to see?

- Strategy
 - Embedding engagement
 - Stakeholders
 - Partnerships
 - Shared ownership



Thank you!

Our strategy has informed all of our engagement, pushing us to try to create a programme that engages and excites our local and national communities, listening and responding to them as our partners and creating a sense of shared ownership

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