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Technology
Facilities Council

Delivering large scale public engagement open weeks at STFC

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UK Research & Innovation
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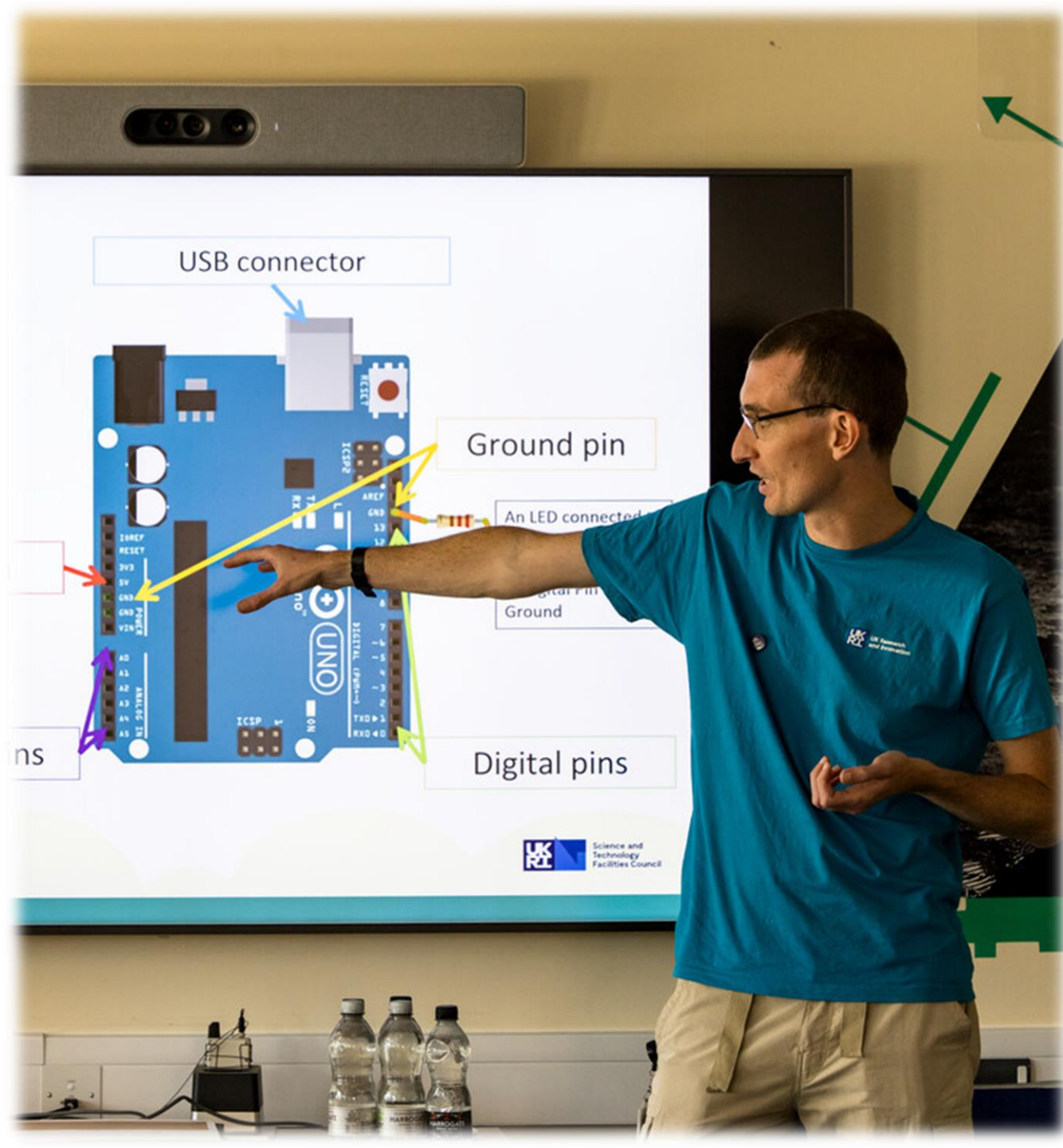
CHEP2024, Krakow, Poland, 21 Oct 2024

Who am I?

Work in UKRI/STFC's Scientific Computing department (SC) as a Software Engineer.

SC Public Engagement Coordinator, working closely with our full time Public Engagement teams.

Involved in and later lead on SC's contributions to the Open Weeks



Agenda

1 Context

2 STFC Open Weeks

Overview, Structure and Format, Planning, Accessibility and Inclusion, Role of individual STFC departments

3 Impact

4 Future Plans



Introduction to STFC and UKRI

The Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC), part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), works with the UK government to deliver, support and invest in fundamental research in computational science, astronomy, physics, and space science.



**UK Research
and Innovation**

STFC Public Engagement and Outreach

STFC has a strategic objective to use their stories, community and facilities to engage the next generation.

STFC's facilities give us a unique opportunity to inspire the next generation with their remarkable scale, ambition, and achievement

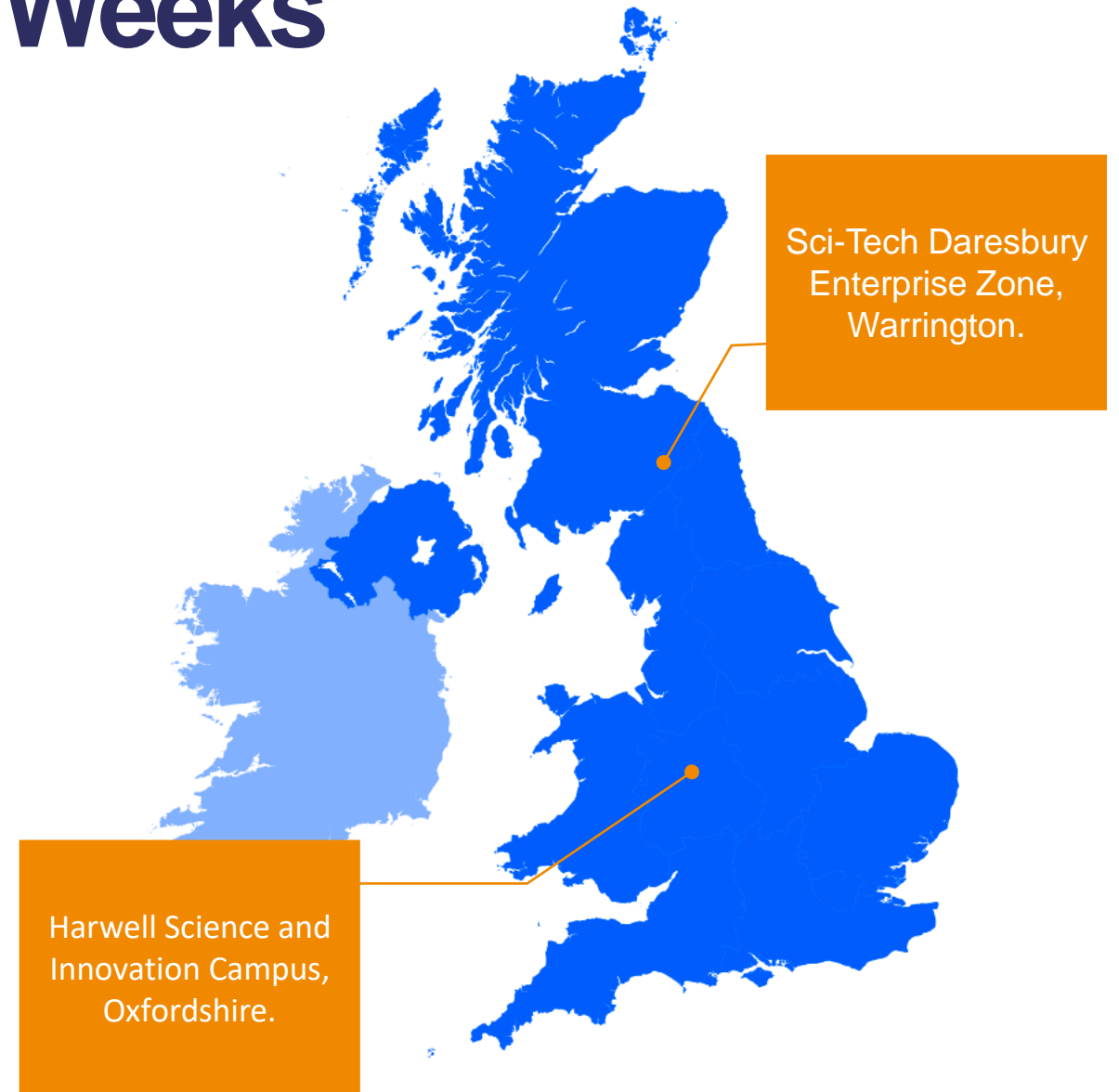


Overview of the Open Weeks

Run in Daresbury in July 2023 and Harwell in June 2024, Scientific Computing operates at both sites.

Aims:

- To share STFC's incredible work and its impact
- To engage and involve under-served communities with STFC's work
- To enable participants to feel that "science and technology are for people like me"
- To inspire a feeling of pride in our staff and foster wellbeing



Structure and Format of an STFC Open Week

A wider campus day, two school days, a staff day and a public day on Saturday.

Schools and Public days were a mix of demonstrations, hands on activities, talks and tours.

Complex project, with many stakeholders, new activities and logistical hurdles.



Planning the Event - Governance



Planning the Event – Embedded Principles

Embedded principles of:

- Safety
- Inclusion
- Sustainability
- High Quality
- Skills
- Evaluation



Accessibility and Inclusion

STEM is for everyone, and there must be no barriers based on gender, social background or any other factor.

Using community partners to promote the event, and provided free transport particularly from areas of higher deprivation.

Quiet areas and Sensory bags



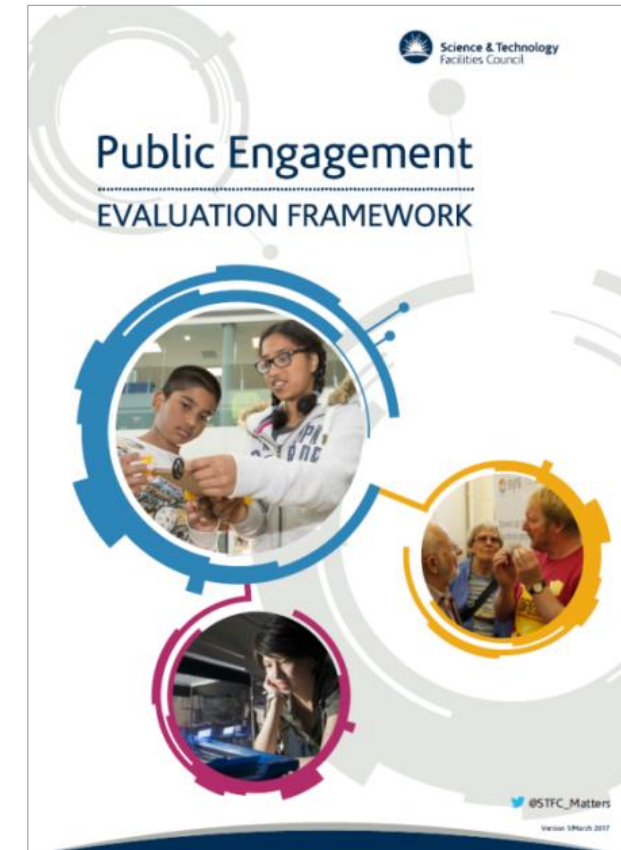
SC's Role and Planning Process

School Days largely business as usual for SC
Public Engagement.

Public Day – started off quite democratic

- Ideas generation
- Common themes identified
- Refining and developing ideas

Also: Department wide logistics and Coordinating
with other STFC departments / Core Team



[STFC's Evaluation Framework](#)



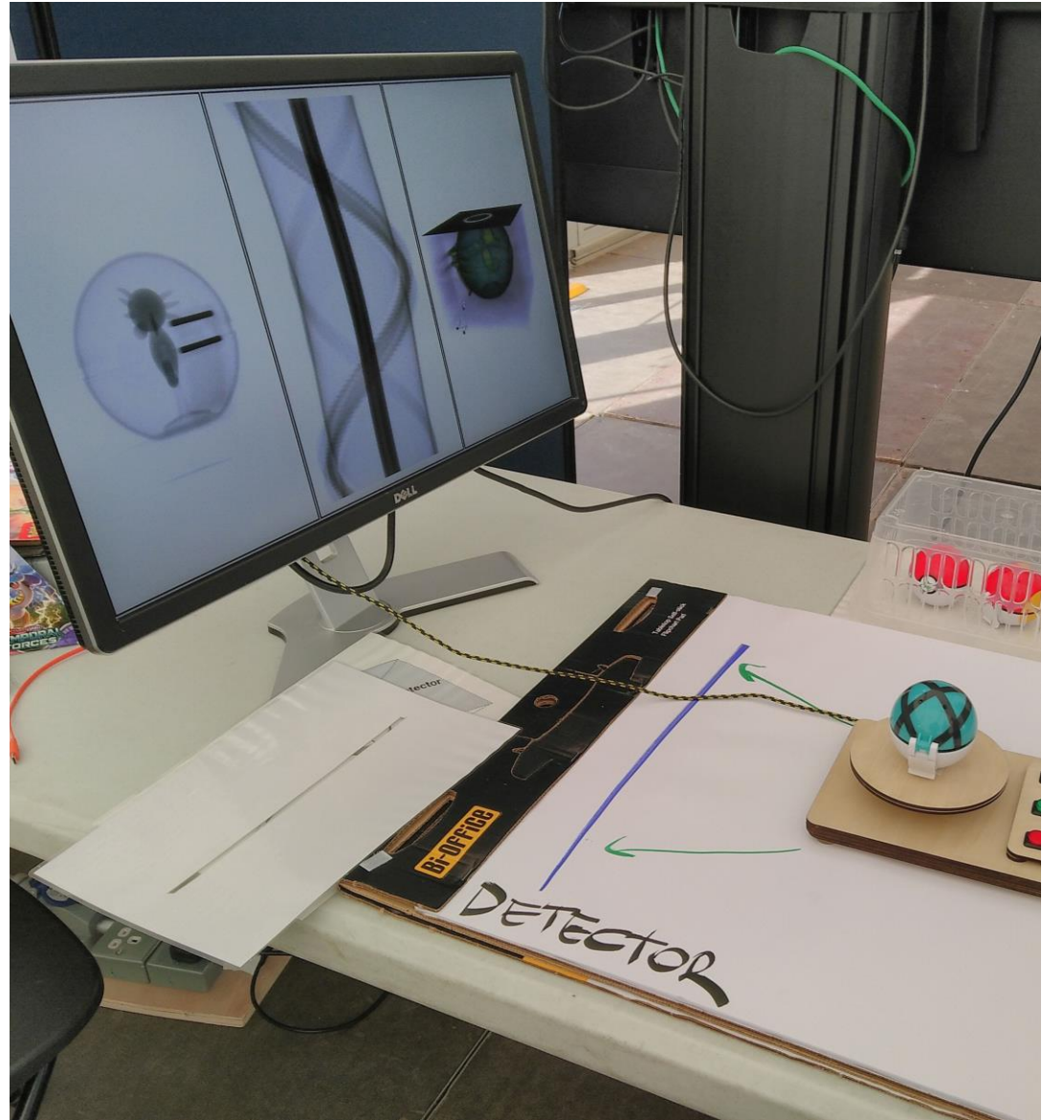
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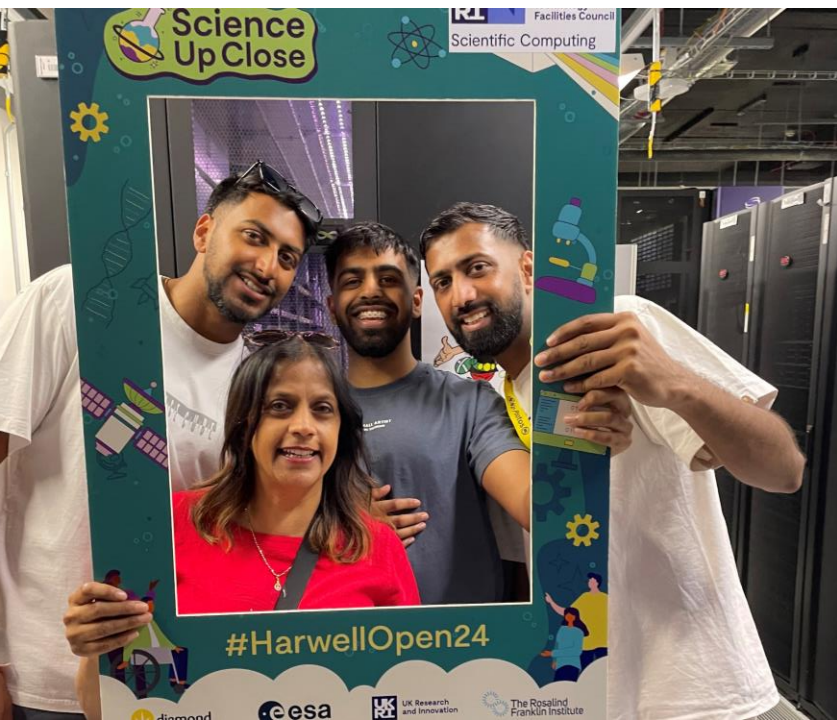
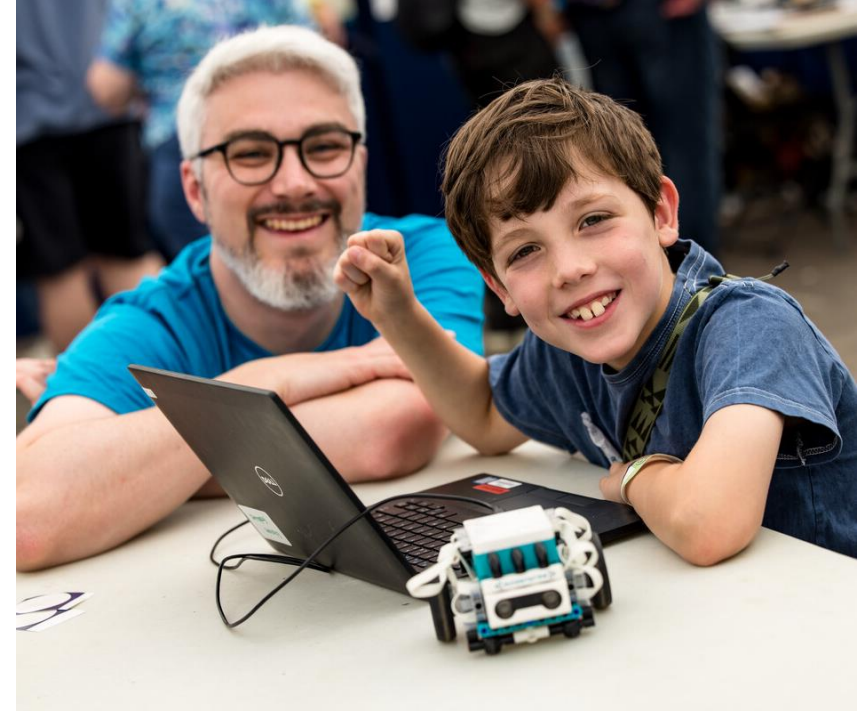
SC's Contributions and Activities



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SC's HOW Wonder Project

In the run up to the Harwell Open Week, departments at RAL worked with local Wonder Schools over the course of four months on a multi-intervention project.

SC leveraged the existing Remote3 project*, where student worked to program LEGO Mars Rovers that would operate 1.1km underground.

Coaches brought the children and their families to the public day, with children acting as “Site Ambassadors”.



Impact of the Open Weeks

Daresbury

Schools

- 100% teachers rated the event a 4 or 5 out of 5
- 72% of pupils said that they were very inspired
- 66% of pupils indicated to their teachers that they would be more likely to work at a place like Daresbury following the visit

Public

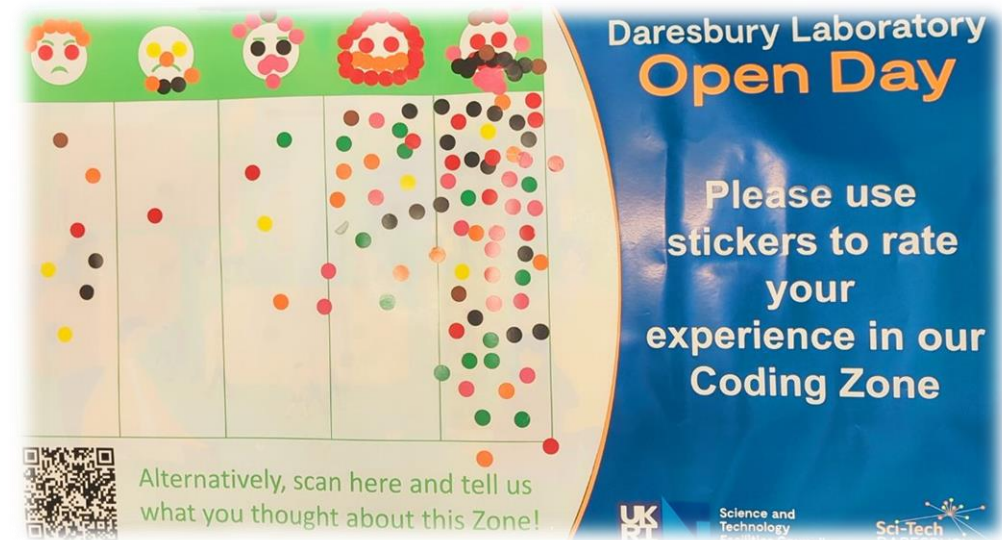
- 72% had never engaged with STFC before (61% of all visitors lived within a 5km)
- 94% gave the event 4 or 5 out of 5
- 73% of the children felt that working in STEM or computing was an option for them



Impact of the Open Weeks

Harwell - Evaluation is still on going

- Satisfaction 4.4/5
- 94% want to find out more
- 78% of children are more interested in working in STEM (we saw a 46% increase in traffic to the careers website compared to the previous two weeks, 94% of visitors were new users and the peak day was Sunday 1 July)



Lessons Learned and Future Directions

Lessons Learnt

- Wellbeing of staff is key
- Underestimating time needed to ensure safe Public Engagement

Future Direction

- Evaluation shows Open Weeks are well received by schools and the public
- Leaves an organisation legacy
 - Many new members of staff introduced to Public Engagement
 - Many new resources are produced
- It was originally suggested that these Open Weeks run every 4 years. Open Week 2027?





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Questions?



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Thank you



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@STFC_Matters



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