

## Introduction

The Science & Technology Facilities Council is recognised as a leader in STEM engagement in the UK. We reach well over a million people every year with our engagement activities and training, including the work of our community that we support with grant funding, networking, and the sharing of best practice.

During the 2017/18 financial year, we reviewed and refreshed our [public engagement grant schemes](#), and provided [new guidance to grant holders](#) to assist them in reporting the outcomes of their engagement. We explored new approaches to local engagement surrounding our national laboratories, including working with a range of local partners near our Daresbury Laboratories to bring children and families on to site who would never have otherwise engaged with STFC science and technology. We also re-launched our [lunar rock and meteorites loan scheme](#), and entered the final year of the current phase of the highly-successful Explore Your Universe programme. This short delivery plan outlines the key activities we will undertake during the 2018/19 financial year to develop towards the vision we have for the programme in 2021.

## Public Engagement in STFC

Our public engagement programme uses the work of STFC's staff, facilities, and wider community to involve people with science and technology. We want people all across the UK be inspired by science and engineering, to understand its value to society, and to appreciate that science and engineering open doors to hundreds of rewarding careers.

Our public engagement team is based over four STFC sites – our three National Laboratory sites at Daresbury Laboratories in Cheshire, Rutherford Appleton Laboratories in Oxfordshire, the UK Astronomy Technology Centre in Edinburgh, and our Headquarters in Swindon. The team carries out a wide range of activities that deliver our strategy, including bringing the public onto our science and innovation campuses, providing grant funding schemes for public engagement, working with teachers and educators to incorporate STFC science as a context for their teaching, creating partnerships with national and international organisations that increase awareness and understanding of STFC's science and engineering, and networking together the STFC community to share ideas and best practice.

As one of seven UK Research Councils, STFC is committed to identifying appropriate opportunities for cross-Council partnership working that delivers more effective engagement outcomes, or allows us to undertake our work more efficiently.

## Supporting the strategic development of STFC Public Engagement

All our activities are conceived and delivered in line with our public engagement strategy. This delivery plan provides a short outline of the major areas of development work we will be focusing on during 2018/19. Each of these projects addresses, to some extent, all five of the strategic aims for public engagement that are listed in our strategy.

### ***1. Raising STEM capital by improving our engagement with diverse audiences***

We strongly believe that STEM is for everyone, regardless of background. Drawing on best practice from within the STFC community and beyond, we are committed to moving the focus of our public engagement programme such that the majority of our work engages with low STEM capital audiences. This year, every strand of our programme will explicitly begin this transition.

### ***2. A public engagement and communications campaign for the James Webb Space Telescope***

The James Webb Space Telescope is a flagship project for STFC and the UK research community. We will work with partners across the UK to implement a strategy for a nationwide campaign that fully exploits the inspirational value of the Telescope and highlights the important role that the UK has played in the engineering, design, and scientific content of the mission.

### ***3. STFC science & technology supporting formal STEM learning***

Educators are key STEM influencers, and people with whom we want to work closely to understand how stories of STFC science & technology can be best used to enhance learning in schools. We will continue to map our science & technology to national curricula, and explore new working models of student, teacher, and family engagement.

### ***4. Implementing STFC's evaluation framework for public engagement***

We will continue to develop our approach towards effective evaluation, expanding our use of qualitative information to accompany quantitative data. We will also seek to apply the principles of our evaluation framework to our wider programme, including working with grant holders, and both national and international partners.

### ***5. Understanding attitudes to public engagement within STFC peer review***

The ability to secure project-specific public engagement funding via Pathways to Impact on STFC research and training grants is an important component of ensuring adequate engagement funding by STFC. We will produce a report that details the results of our investigation into STFC's own peer review behaviours, and begin to implement the accompanying action plan.

### ***6. Better supporting STFC staff to participate in and deliver public engagement***

Our hugely successful open events at Harwell, Daresbury, and the Royal Observatory Edinburgh have shown us how enthused STFC staff are to engage with their local audiences. Building on staff consultation, we will implement targeted support for STFC staff to improve engagement practice across the whole of STFC.

### ***7. Increasing our support for early career researchers***

We know that researchers near the start of their careers typically make more time to undertake public engagement compared to their more established peers. We also know that there remain significant barriers to early career researchers carrying out engagement as frequently, or as well, as they would like. We will implement a range of measures to help support early career researchers in the STFC community develop and deliver their public engagement.

March 2018