

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AT CSCI

ABOUT US

The Cambridge Stem Cell Institute (CSCI) is a world-leading centre for stem cell research. Our mission is to transform the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease through a deep understanding of how stem cells work.

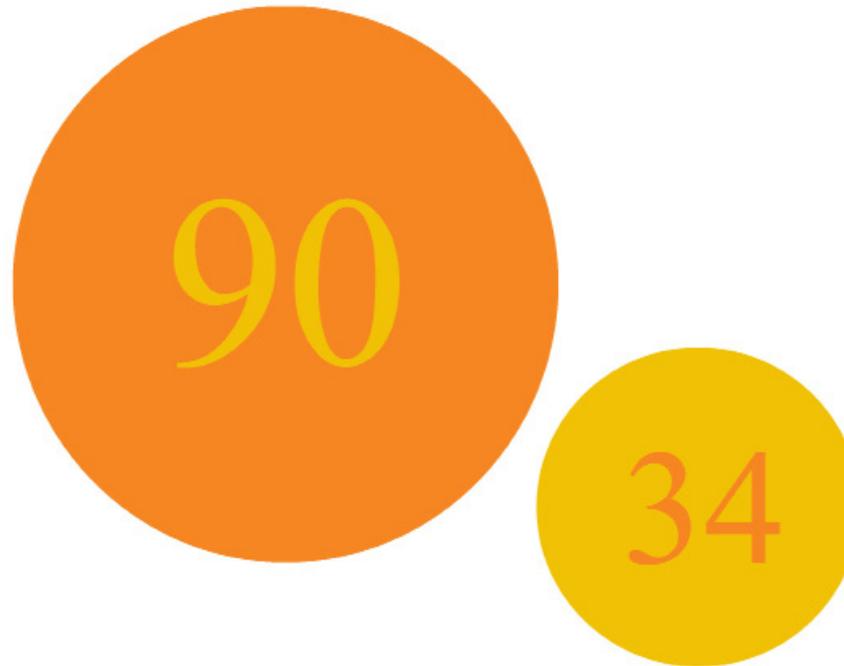
THE PUBLIC

Over the last two decades, stem cell research has received considerable media attention due to its ethical, legal, social and medical implications. Despite the fact that up to 90% of people in the UK have heard of “stem cells”, only 34% feel “well-informed” about them.

WHY ENGAGE?

Public engagement (PE) activities can be used to redress this imbalance in order to build public confidence and ensure informed decision-making about stem cell research. Equally, engagement allows us to stay in touch with public views and inspires us to have the greatest possible impact on society.

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BACKGROUND

Since the foundation of the ‘Cambridge Centre for Stem Cell Research’ in 2006, we have been building expertise in how to improve awareness and understanding of our research. With the support and encouragement of our funders, we have taken active steps to build our capacity to engage with the public about the work that we do.

ENGAGEMENT OFFICER

In 2014, the Institute was awarded a Wellcome Trust ‘Provision for Public Engagement’ grant, which allowed for the appointment of a full-time Public Engagement Officer (PEO). The post was filled at the beginning of 2015.

ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME

Our annual agenda of PE activities, events and training is known as the Public Engagement Programme. This strategy outlines what the PE Programme hopes to achieve.

ENGAGEMENT TEAM

OUR APPROACH

69% of the British public think that “scientists should listen more to what ordinary people think”. Our strategy and PE Programme therefore stress the importance of engagement opportunities, namely **dialogue**, **interaction** and **collaboration**. We concentrate on creating opportunities for the public to explore and question research developments and for researchers to improve their awareness of public views.

KEY ROLES



Dr. Rebecca Jones
PE Manager

Rebecca coordinates an integrated programme of training and engagement opportunities for all 300+ researchers and affiliates at the CSCI. She is responsible for the strategic growth of engagement.



Dr. David Kent
PE Champion

Dr Kent aims to inspire all researchers to treat engagement as an important part of their careers. As a group leader, he represents PE at senior levels and provides an example of best practice.



Prof. Tony Green
Director

Professor Green ensures that a coordinated, top-down approach to embedding PE is adopted as an essential part of the CSCI research culture.

VISION & GOALS

OUR VISION

The Cambridge Stem Cell Institute strives to be at the forefront of a growing research engagement movement. We will foster a culture of science engagement by contributing to greater mutual trust between scientists and the public, by improving scientific literacy and by raising the aspirations of researchers and the public.

GOAL 1

Provide regular and diverse opportunities for transparency, dialogue and collaboration between the public and our researchers.



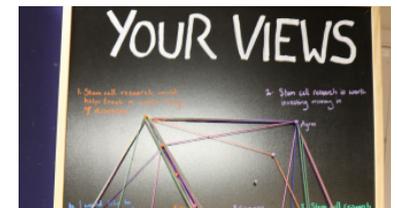
GOAL 2

Professionalise researcher participation through tailored skills training, time allowance, recognition and reward.



GOAL 3

Increase our understanding of public views and interests, allowing us to be responsive and forward thinking when directing our research.



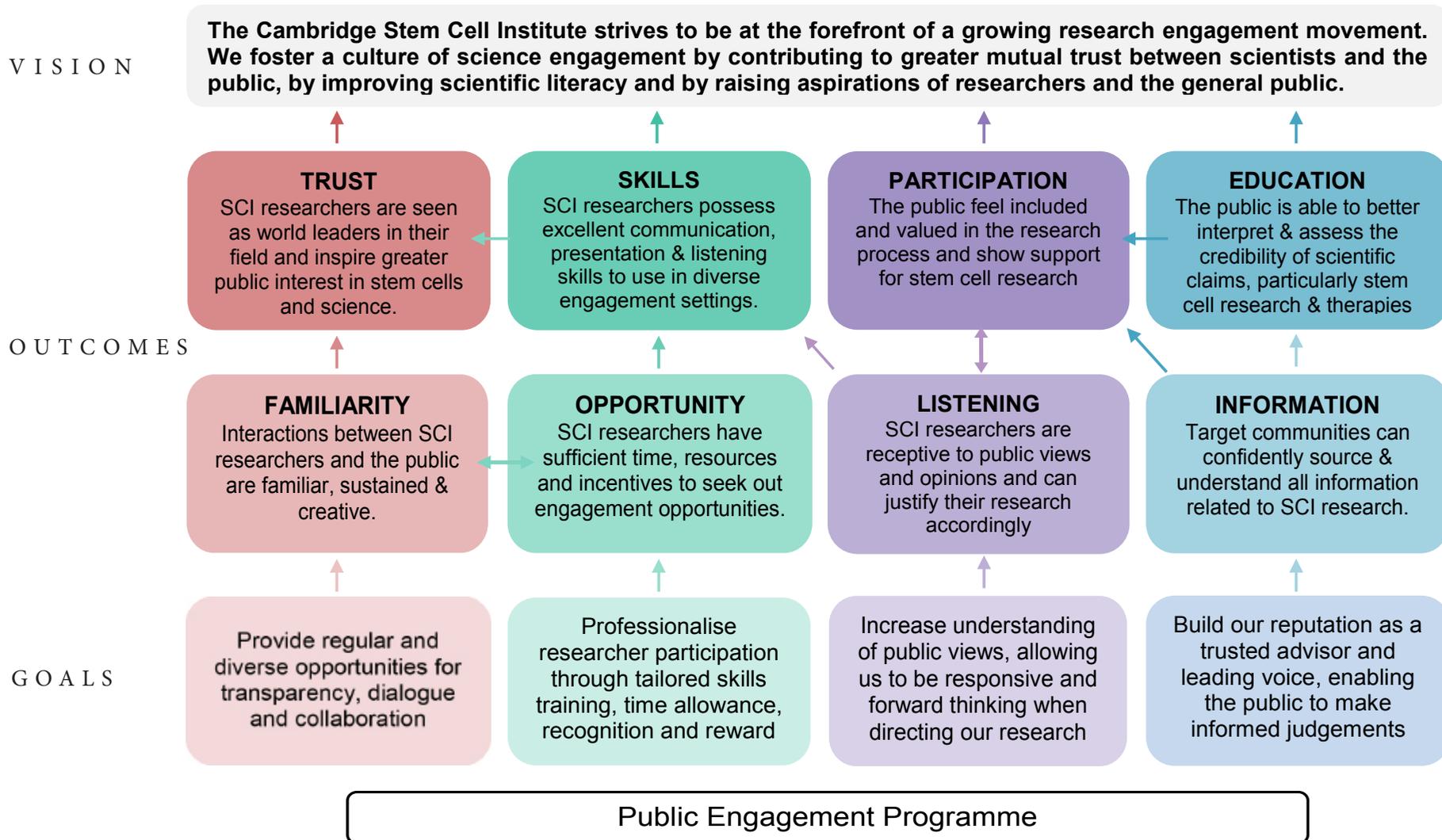
GOAL 4

Build our reputation as a trusted advisor and leading voice on stem cells, enabling the public to make informed judgements and decisions.



THEORY OF CHANGE

The Theory of Change shows how the PE Programme will contribute to our overall vision. It includes the assumed primary and secondary outcomes if we achieve all four of our goals. The chart is best read from the bottom up.



TARGET COMMUNITIES

The CSCI aims to provide engagement opportunities for a wide range of people, from policy makers to patient groups. We have identified five specific communities that we aim to reach through the PE Programme; two of which are priority 'new' communities.

CORE COMMUNITIES



We aim to make best use of local networks and available resources to build on current progress. Core communities are already aware of the CSCI and/or stem cells and may have previously engaged with us directly. We will diversify and enhance the engagement opportunities available to them.

01. Over 50's

At previous public events, we have observed high attendance amongst the over-50s. These individuals can be important 'thought leaders' in their families and wider communities, helping us to increase our reach and impact. We will engage the over 50's in focus groups, debates and ongoing collaborative projects.

02. Cambridge families

The CSCI aims to be an active and responsible member of the immediate local community. We have been a key participant in local science engagement activities such as the Cambridge Science Festival in recent years. We will continue to participate in collective, community-based activities to ensure local awareness of and support for our research. By researching best practice, experimenting with new formats and measuring impact, we will develop unique and memorable activities that can also be used to launch new local projects and events.

03. Under-served schools and youth organisations

In collaboration with outreach organisations in the Cambridgeshire region, we will identify schools with majority intakes from under-served backgrounds, schools with little or no prior access to researchers and non-school groups for disadvantaged young people. We will encourage repeat initiatives with a small number of schools and groups to ensure lasting engagement. Interaction between young people and researchers will be prioritised but we will also work closely with teachers.

PRIORITY NEW COMMUNITIES

These are groups that may not be aware of the Institute or stem cells; they rarely engage with scientific topics and may require innovative formats in order to access research.

In addition to the general audiences that can be reached online, we have identified two priority target communities. We aim to reach and inspire these two new communities regularly throughout the 39-month grant period using a range of specific engagement activities.

01. Hard to reach adults

Within Cambridgeshire, there are some particularly active groups that have regular access to researchers, academics, museums and cultural centres but there are also some isolated populations. These include: rural communities, adults with little formal education, minority groups and people with disabilities. We wish to provide new routes for these individuals to access world-leading research. To do so, we will experiment with novel activities, unusual locations, targeted invitations and popular awareness initiatives. In the first instance this will include 'pop-up' activity stalls and interactive social media campaigns, which have shown significant potential when piloted by others in the science engagement field.

02. Patient groups

Most of our current interaction with patient groups is led independently by our clinician-researchers or on an ad-hoc basis through enquiries. During the strategy period, we will consult with these communities to better understand their needs and interests. We aim to develop sustained, patient-led interactions and to enable early involvement in the research process. Conscious of the complex regulatory environment and potentially rapid availability of new stem cell technologies, we aim to ensure that public policy debates are well informed. Patients can act as high-impact spokespeople for our research and may wish to contribute actively to raising awareness and influencing policy decisions.



PROGRAMME COMMITMENTS

GOAL 1. Provide regular and diverse opportunities for transparency, dialogue and collaboration between the public and our researchers

- Work with existing community and engagement groups in Cambridgeshire to share best practice, identify engagement gaps and maximise efficiency and reach.
- Participate in local science festivals, open days & cultural events.
- Establish long-term partnerships with under-served schools.
- Facilitate participation in post-secondary work experience.
- Provide at least three engagement activities for 'hard to reach' audiences each year. Allow for experimental formats and locations.

GOAL 2. Professionalise researcher participation through tailored skills training, time allowance, resources, recognition and reward

- Provide all volunteers with essential training, advice and support.
- Facilitate access to formal skills development training.
- Acknowledge all participating researchers internally and publicly.
- Offer PE rewards, competitions and awards.
- Develop PE grant application protocols.
- Develop new stem cell specific resources and activities.
- Embed PE time commitments in formal procedures.

GOAL 3. Increase our understanding of public views and interests, allowing us to be responsive and forward thinking when directing our research

- Build the non-specialist public audience on Twitter & Facebook.
- Encourage public comment and interaction with all digital content.
- Ensure representation of public views at Institute events.
- Work collaboratively with policy groups such as the Cambridge Centre for Science and Policy to build links with officials.
- Consult with patient groups to develop engagement opportunities suited to their needs.
- Develop the PE mailing list.

GOAL 4. Build our reputation as a trusted advisor and leading voice on stem cells, enabling the public to make informed judgements

- Develop user-friendly 'Find Out More' and 'What's On?' sections of the public website.
- Coordinate with EuroStemCell to ensure the quality and validity of all materials and activities.
- Prepare specific materials and offer topical consultation events for policy makers.
- Use video and interactive technologies to present our researchers as approachable experts.
- Respond promptly and accurately to individual enquiries.
- Seek out engagement / awareness opportunities through collaboration with respected media.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The CSCI PE Steering Committee is responsible for shaping and implementing the Institute's PE strategy. It reports directly to the CSCI Scientific Advisory Board on an annual basis.

Frequency of meetings

Once per term (3 meetings annually) in addition to ad hoc meetings for specific tasks and events as necessary.

2016 - 2017 Members

- PE Champion - David Kent (Committee Chair)
- PE Manager - Rebecca Jones
- Research Strategy and Comms Manager - Abi Herrmann
- PhD Student representative - Julia Spindel
- Postdoctoral Fellow representative - Thorsten Klampfl
- Partner Institution representatives
 - Gurdon Institute - Helene Doerflinger
 - Cambridge University Research Office - Charlotte Carroll

MONITORING & EVALUATION

- A PE database captures information on participation, attendance and demographics at all events.
- The PE Officer provides event reports, photographs and observational feedback to support this data.

- We use a range of evaluation methods including observation, surveys and interviews to quickly identify problems, make instant modifications and plan for future improvements.
- All engagement activities are planned and evaluated against their potential contribution to the goals outlined in this strategy following the evaluation framework below.

Goal	Outputs	Outcomes	Indicators of Success	Means of Verification
Goal 1: Provide regular and diverse opportunities for transparency, dialogue and collaboration between the public and our researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSCI coordinated public resources, events & activities • Member participation in external public events & activities • CSCI films & lay publications • Member participation with external media • Dialogue through social media 	<p>FAMILIARITY: Interactions between CSCI researchers and the public are familiar, sustained & creative</p> <p>TRUST: CSCI researchers are seen as world leaders in their field and inspire greater public interest in stem cells and science</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number, variety & quality of PE events • Increase in percentage of CSCI members participating in internal & external PE events & activities • Increased diversity of public participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PE events & volunteer database Event survey feedback Observation External evaluation
Goal 2: Professionalise researcher participation through tailored skills training, time allowance, recognition and reward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailored internal training events • Member participation in external training • Bursaries, prizes, accolades (internal & external) • Internal communication of PE achievements • Guidelines & resources for grant applications 	<p>OPPORTUNITY: CSCI researchers have sufficient time, resources and incentives to seek out engagement opportunities</p> <p>SKILLS: CSCI researchers possess excellent communication, presentation & listening skills to use in diverse engagement settings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Group Leaders encouraging PE participation • Increase in researcher time commitment and repeat participation • Increase in number of research grants with PE activities and costs embedded. • Increase in reporting of PE experience on member CVs • Improved perception of PE as important element of research career 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PE events & volunteer database Research grant application records Institute member CVs External evaluation
Goal 3: Increase our understanding of public views and interests, allowing us to be responsive and forward thinking when directing our research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-specialist following on social media • Public representation at CSCI strategy meetings • Public participation in PE event design • Participation in external public consultations 	<p>LISTENING: CSCI researchers are receptive to public views and opinions and can justify their research accordingly</p> <p>PARTICIPATION: The public feel included and valued in the research process and show support for stem cell research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of public speaking time at live events • Repeat public attendance • Repeat researcher participation • Increased inclusion of public consultation in research grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observation PE events & volunteer database Research grants application records External evaluation
Goal 4: Build our reputation as a trusted advisor and leading voice on stem cells, enabling the public to make informed judgements and decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate, engaging & up-to-date information on CSCI website • CSCI presence on respected national & international webpages • Member participation with external media • Member participation in policy debates 	<p>INFORMATION: Target communities can confidently source & understand all information related to CSCI research</p> <p>EDUCATION: The public is able to better interpret & assess the credibility of scientific claims, particularly stem cell research & therapies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of press & other media requests • Increase in reach and impact of press releases and articles • Increased public enquiries demonstrating an interest in and understanding of CSCI research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews & focus groups Google analytics Public enquiries record External evaluation

FUNDING & EXPANSION

FUNDING SOURCES

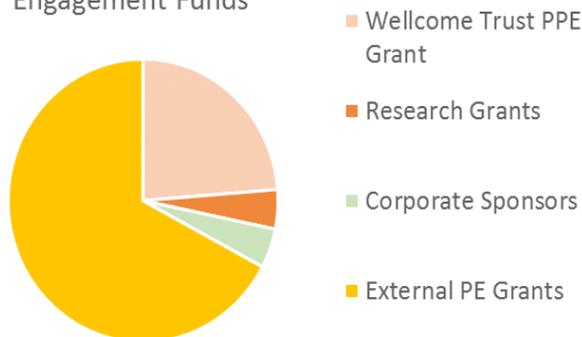
Staff costs are currently funded by the Wellcome Trust Provision for Public Engagement. This grant also provides a modest implementation budget. In addition we source funds to support our engagement activities from sponsors and other competitive grant schemes. Increasingly, we apply for funding to support engagement from within research grants.



NEW BUILDING

In 2018, all Institute members will move to a purpose-built centre on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. This will present new opportunities to showcase and share our research with the public and will require focused engagement efforts in the immediate community. The activities undertaken in this grant period will ensure that we have skilled researchers and well-developed activities to capitalise on our relocation.

2015 Source of Public Engagement Funds



LOOKING FORWARD

As our skills, resources and independence grow, we aim to enhance both the quality and quantity of our engagement activities. In order to deliver an expanded programme of events that make the most of our new facilities, we anticipate a modest and phased growth in our PE Team.

For further information on our PE Strategy, please
contact: scipe@stemcells.cam.ac.uk

You can find out more about our latest events on our
website: www.stemcells.cam.ac.uk and on Facebook
& Twitter [@SCICambridge](https://twitter.com/SCICambridge)

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