

Regional Steering Group

Spring 2021

Online

Summary of actions

1	<p>All members to share the regional Parliamentary Affairs and Policy and Evidence updates with their committees.</p> <p><i>Updates attached below.</i></p>	All
2	<p>All members to share the Chemists' Community Fund update with their committees.</p> <p><i>Update attached below.</i></p>	All
3	<p>All members to share the Inclusion and Diversity update with their committees.</p> <p><i>Update attached below.</i></p>	All
4	<p>All members to share the 2020 member network activity report with their committees.</p> <p><i>Update attached below.</i></p>	All

Parliamentary Affairs update – England

Background

Since our last update, parliamentary business has continued to be dominated by the pandemic and the impact of Brexit.

Budget

The chancellor presented the budget to Parliament on Wednesday 3 March. The focus was, of course, on the economic recovery from Covid and the impact of Brexit, but there were references to science spending and we issued this response from Helen Pain within an hour:

While understandably today's budget has focused on supporting business and individuals in the face of the ongoing effects of the pandemic, it stopped short of providing the detail for how the government will capitalise on our status as a "scientific superpower".

Research and innovation continuity

The research and innovation community has played a vital role in the fight against COVID-19, with the chemical sciences making a huge contribution to understanding SARS-CoV-2 function, and to the development of diagnostic tools, vaccines and potential treatments for disease.

The Chancellor's recognition of our world-leading science community and intention to introduce measures to support it are obviously welcome, specifically regarding visa reforms to allow innovative companies to continue to attract talented scientists from around the world. We will advocate for our community to play its part in the announced consultations affecting the R&D community.

While recognising the importance of the intention to continue to provide additional COVID support, the government must not forget non-COVID research. The chemical sciences community is a huge contributor to tackling all health issues, from COVID to cancer and dementia, as well as playing a crucial role in the fight against climate change. It is paramount that Government explains how it will protect the domestic science budget and clearly sets out its pathway to delivering its commitment to increase R and D spend to 2.4%.

Chemistry in economic recovery

We welcome the government's intention to invest in high technology start-ups. R&D intensive SMEs in the chemical sciences make a significant contribution to the challenges we all face. Support for these organisations to scale up has real potential to contribute to recovery through essential economic and societal impact.

Overall, today's announcement was light on specifics regarding how the government intends to use the strength of the wider scientific sector to build back better. Treasury have published their plan for growth alongside the budget today, so we will hold the government to account on supporting a sector that generates an average of £83bn annually for the UK economy and is playing a key role in the fight against COVID.

Education

While a lot of discussion in the run-up to today's announcement has been on additional funding for pupil catch-up to address lost learning, particularly of the most disadvantaged learners, it feels like a missed opportunity that the Chancellor did not present a framework for the holistic plan that is so needed in supporting students and new teachers, in the medium and longer term.

Government must also ensure the continued and long-term sustainability of high-quality training in key STEM areas such as the chemical sciences, in view of the increased financial constraints experienced by providers due to the pandemic.

Events in Parliament

As you would expect, no physical events are being held in Parliament currently and this will be the case until autumn and perhaps beyond. We continue to hold, co-host and take part in virtual events – for example, Voice of the Future (an opportunity for early career scientists to question ministers, shadow ministers and Select Committee members) and STEM for Britain (a poster competition supporting better science policy), both of which take place this month. In the devolved nations, we are organising science hustings online ahead of this year's elections in Scotland and Wales. Our annual flagship events in the three devolved nations will also go ahead in the autumn in physical form, if that is possible, having been run successfully as virtual events last autumn.

Influencing during the pandemic

We continue to maintain the parliamentary and governmental relationships we need to successfully influence relevant policy. While face-to-face meetings and events are not happening because of the pandemic, we continue to provide briefings to parliamentarians for debates and on our policy priorities, draft parliamentary questions for MPs and peers to table and respond to consultations and Select Committees. Virtual meetings with civil servants and other organisations also continue, across the range of policy areas that our sector has an interest in – from apprenticeships to open access, from safe return of undergraduates to labs to the needs of SMEs, from sustainability and the circular economy to R&D and the role chemistry plays in global challenges, including the pandemic.

Telling your MP what you think

A reminder that for those members who want to raise issues with their MPs, but who have not previously done this or are unsure how best to approach an issue, there is advice and support on our website. We will also shortly be launching the Engaging Networks tool, which enables us to provide template emails and ask members to help us by contacting their MPs on specific issues. There will be opportunities to email your MP on a variety of subjects, directly through our website. Over the coming months you will start seeing buttons on some of our webpages, which you can click to email your MP, and we will be sending occasional emails about larger campaigns. The impact of constituents writing to their MP is far greater than just the RSC writing to MPs as a learned society.

Matt Davies, Parliamentary Affairs Manager
March 2021

Parliamentary Affairs Update – Devolved Nations

Northern Ireland

In late 2020 we ran our first ever virtual Science and Stormont event. Designed to foster close relations between scientists and policymakers, Science and Stormont is organised by the Royal Society of Chemistry, on behalf of, and in cooperation with, the Northern Ireland science and engineering community. The theme for the event was ‘Climate Science, Sustainability...and Covid 19’ with speakers including Steve Aiken MLA, Professor John Barry, Queen’s University Belfast, Professor Jenny McElwain, Trinity College Dublin & Royal Irish Academy, and Dr Helen Pain, Acting CEO, RSC.

We continue to run the NI Assembly All Party Group on STEM virtually and our most recent meeting focussed on the ongoing development of the Northern Ireland Energy Strategy. Speakers included Thomas Byrne, Director, Energy Strategy, Dept. for the Economy, and Steven Agnew, Head of RenewablesNI.

We have undertaken ongoing public affairs work to promote the activity of the RSC including engaging MLAs and the Executive on our “Chemistry’s Contribution” report into the Chemistry workforce.

Scotland

We are currently working on two major public affairs activities ahead of the Holyrood elections. The first of these is a virtual hustings events with the political parties. This is being organised in collaboration with the IOP, RSB and RSE, and will focus on science. This will give our members the opportunity to grill election candidates and ask how their parties will support science in the next Parliament. The hustings event is scheduled for the evening of 13 April, details on how to attend will be shared with members.

The second key activity is the launch of our manifesto briefing. This outlines our key asks ahead of the election and highlights areas the RSC wants the Parliament and Government to focus on during the next term. We are looking to line up a campaign alongside this encouraging members to email their local candidates asking them to become a ‘science champion’ at Holyrood, this will be done via our new Engaging Networks campaign platform. We are encouraging all members to get involved and would appreciate RSG support.

We held our annual Science and the Parliament event on Wed 18 Nov. For the first time ever this was a virtual event with more than 200 attendees across the day. The topic for the event was “Skills, Innovation and Covid 19” with speakers including Minister for Higher Education, Further Education and Science, Richard Lochhead MSP, Dame Anne Glover, president of the RSE, and an MSP panel chaired by former BBC Scotland Science Correspondent Ken MacDonald.

Wales

We are currently working on two major public affairs activities ahead of the Senedd elections. The first of these is a virtual hustings events with the political parties. This is being organised in collaboration with the IOP, RSB and LSW, and will focus on science. This will give our members the opportunity to grill election candidates and ask how their parties will support science in the

next Senedd. The hustings event is scheduled for the evening of 8 April, details on how to attend will be shared with members.

The second key activity is the launch of our manifesto briefing. This outlines our key asks ahead of the election and highlights areas the RSC wants the Senedd and Welsh Government to focus on during the next term. We are looking to line up a campaign alongside this encouraging members to email their local candidates asking them to become a 'science champion' at the Senedd, this will be done via our new Engaging Networks campaign platform. We are encouraging all members to get involved and would appreciate RSG support.

We continue to run the Cross Party Group on STEM at the Senedd and have successfully delivered virtual meetings since the start of the pandemic. Recent meetings have looked at the impact of Brexit on R&I in Wales and across the UK and at the ongoing Hydrogen Energy Strategy being led by the Welsh Government.

***Niall Sommerville, Public Affairs Manager (Devolved Nations)
March 2021***

Policy and Evidence Update

Highlights of outcomes and impact since September 2020

- Following influencing by the research community, including the RSC, the UK will associate to [Horizon Europe](#), (subject to ratification of the overall UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement and finalisation of the Horizon Europe Programme regulations) giving UK scientists, researchers and businesses access to:
 - All pillars of Horizon Europe (including the European Research Council and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions), as well as:
 - Joint Research Centre activities
 - Article 185 and 187 partnerships
 - The European Institute of Innovation and Technology
 - The European Research Infrastructures Consortium 12 January 2020
 - The European Research Area Committee.
 - Euratom Research and Training Programme
 - European Joint Undertaking for ITER ('F4E') and the Development of Fusion Energy
 - Copernicus

The only part of Horizon Europe in which the UK will not participate is the new European Innovation Council fund which provides equity based investment to SMEs, however UK entities will still be eligible to apply for the grant elements of the European Innovation Council.

UK researchers will still be able to lead projects and UK officials and experts will be able to attend programme committees and working groups, as observers rather than full members. Although this is a change reflecting our new status as an associate members the impact of the move to observer status is expected to be minimal as these groups normally operate on a consensus basis and very rarely take formal votes.

- Our evidence to the Environmental Audit Committee inquiry on electronic waste was cited extensively in the Committee's report and informed its recommendations.
- Opposition MPs tabled two of the amendments proposed in our briefing on the Environment Bill and got reassurances from Government on the points raised.
- Publication of the [report of the Chemistry for All project](#) was accompanied by a launch event which had good engagement and received positive feedback. The recommendations from the report include messages to policymakers, and at the launch event we took the opportunity to highlight additional policy messages. This included the importance of a curriculum that properly introduces the value and relevance of chemistry and its applications, and integrates this with understanding of key concepts and development of skills. We also introduced outcomes from a recent survey investigating the impact of covid on chemistry teaching and learning at school level, and emphasised the need to support those who have missed out most. Many attendees also drew attention to barriers to progression to A-level study; this is a long-standing area of policy work for us, which we continue to press in relevant contexts as the covid impacts are likely to increase the pertinence of this issue.

Summary of Policy Activity

The table below summarises key policy outputs 1 September to 31 December 2020

Output	Descriptions
Consultations and parliamentary inquiries responded to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Learned Societies Group on Scottish STEM education (LSG) submitted evidence to a review of the summer 2020 national qualifications experience. Key points: the difficulty for teachers of making grade judgements, and the need to support this cohort in progression. • The LSG also participated in a forum of subject representatives to inform the independent review of the Curriculum for Excellence. Key points raised are problems connected to multi-course teaching, coherence of the curriculum and balance between teaching and assessment time, and narrowing of choices in S4. A written submission was unfortunately not accepted by the review (as a general point of procedure, not specific to this response), but is published as a response paper • We responded to the Commons Environmental Audit Committee Green Jobs Inquiry • We responded to Defra's Consultation on the Waste, Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Compliance Fee Methodology 2020 • Responded to the Joint H&SC and S&T committee inquiry into lessons learnt so far in covid-19 response. • Submitted a briefing to the House of Lords EU environment Committee on Chemicals Regulation and Brexit.
Public-facing communications including web articles, media, research and event reports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chemistry for All launch event provided opportunities to share policy messages relating to inclusion in chemistry learning and engagement with chemistry. Key messages communicated through the public sessions included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expectations for national qualification assessments in summer 2021 should take into account the realities in lost learning time (including the variance in individual experiences) in the breadth of content students are expected to cover. ○ National curriculum at secondary level should properly integrate an understanding of the value of chemistry in understanding the world around us, and the range of ways in which it enhances our lives and contribute to society. This is a particular area where the curriculum in England needs to develop in the future. • We launched a report The Science Technician Workforce in English Secondary Schools. Working with the Gatsby Foundation and the Association for Science Education we commissioned the National Foundation for Education Research to analyse data about school science technicians from the Department for Education's school workforce census. Key findings of the report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The median full-time equivalent school science technician annual salary has been flat in real-terms between 2011/12 and 2018/19 – having grown at roughly the rate of inflation.

	<p>Most of the science technician workforce is employed on a term-time only basis, which comes with a significantly lower salary compared to those technicians on a full-year contract.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The average number of FTE science technicians per school has fallen by 16 per cent since 2011/12. The proportion of schools with an adequate level of science technician support –according to the Association for Science Education’s suggested minimum service factor – has fallen from 21 to 15 per cent. ○ Regions in the north of England have considerably lower levels of science technician support than in London or the south of England. Additionally, schools with a less affluent pupil intake tend to have less technician support than those with a more affluent intake. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Helen Pain spoke at the Westminster Energy, Environment and Transport Forum on 19 January about our approach to chemicals regulation. These events bring together key policy influencers and are an important way to showcase our work and persuade others. ● The RSC participated in Sense about Science’s Evidence Week in November. This event is an opportunity to present evidence on key topics to MPs and their staff. We presented and discussed evidence on Saving our Elements for a Green Economic Recovery: this was a useful opportunity to highlight our work on critical raw materials further. ● We continued to disseminate findings from the report on ‘Chemistry’s Contribution: Workforce and Economic Trends’ to civil servants, RSC members and other science professional bodies.
<p>New or significantly updated policy positions produced</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In response to The Science Technician Workforce in English Secondary Schools report we have adopted the following policy recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Government should consider what policy measures might encourage schools to increase the level of science technician provision and support. ○ More research should be conducted to understand better the relationship between science technician support and science teacher workload. ○ The Government should review science technician pay and conditions, considering what policy measures might help to attract and retain science technicians in the future ● Drivers and Scope for a new UK Chemicals Framework – builds on ‘A chemicals Strategy for a sustainable chemicals revolution’ making recommendations for a science-led approach to UK chemicals regulation. ● Support for an Independent United Nations Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform for Chemicals & Waste Management (IPCWM)

Tanya Sheridan, Policy and Evidence Manager
March 2021

Chemists' Community Fund Update

Purpose of paper

To note an update on Chemists' Community Fund (RSC Benevolent Fund) activity during 2020.

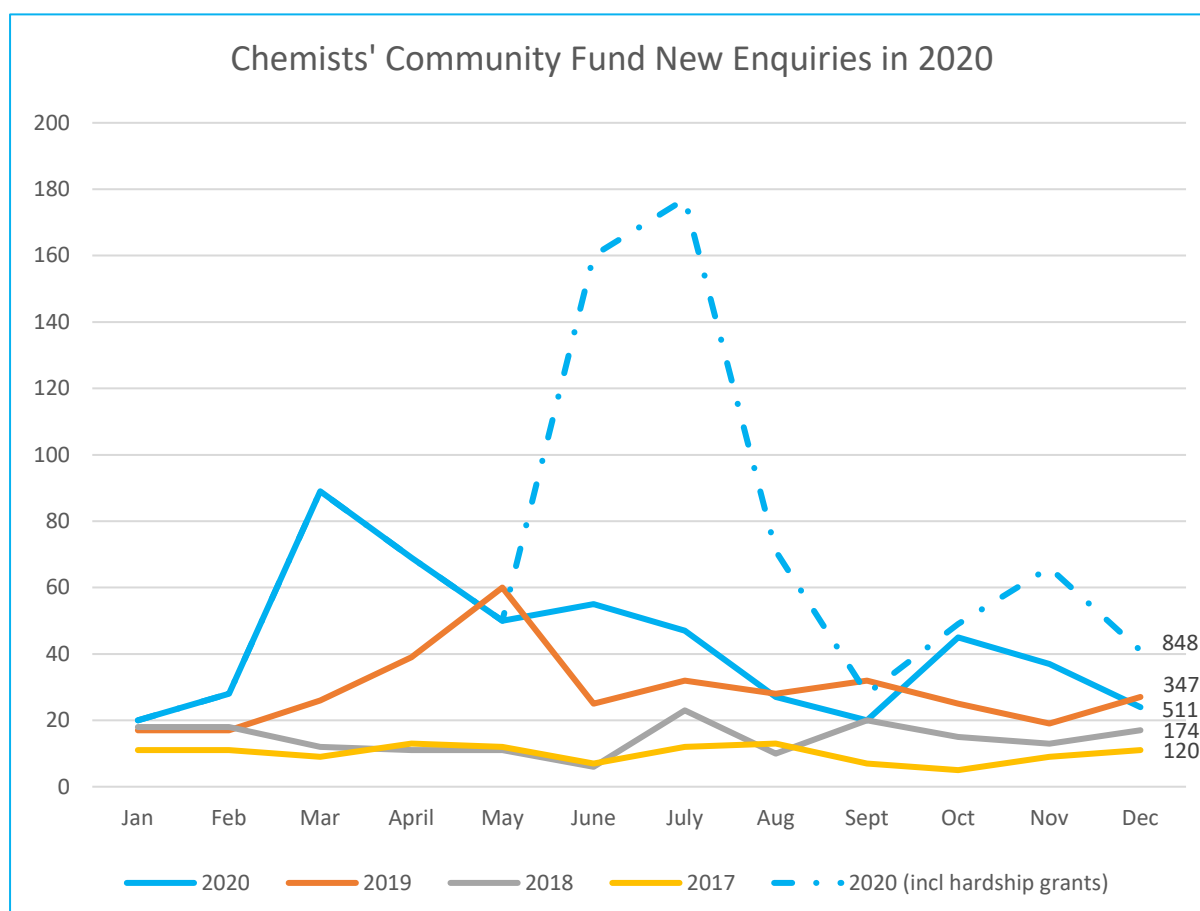
1. Background

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on RSC members and chemists during 2020 led to a dramatic rise in the need for the Fund. This was in addition to the greater awareness raising and expansion of Fund services that had taken place over the past few years.

2. Increase in New Enquiries

In 2020 we saw a significant increase in new enquiries to the Fund. The graph below shows this uplift and the month on month number of new enquiries, along with annual totals of new enquiries.

Whilst the solid blue line enables year on year comparisons for enquiries, the broken blue line includes the introduction of COVID-19 specific hardship grants for non-member chemists.



3. Non-Member Covid-19 Hardship Grants

In April 2020 the Board of Trustees agreed that that we should utilise the secondary purpose of the Fund to extend support via one-off hardship grants to non-member chemists in the UK and Republic of Ireland who were financially impacted by the pandemic.

97% of the recipients of this support so far have been chemistry students.

Number of Hardship Grant applications and awards up to 31st December 2020:

Applications received	RSC Members referred to a Caseworker for enhanced Member support	Pending / Further information requested not received	Declined	Grants awarded
352	18	31	11	9 x full grant of £500 283 x student grant of £250

The feedback from RSC Members regarding us opening up this hardship support more widely across the chemistry community was very positive:

“Extension of hardship grants to support chemists who are not members of the RSC..... Gracious generosity from the Royal Society of Chemistry”

“Fabulous. This is the work that makes me proud to be a member”

“As a member I applaud this gesture”

The Fund Committee will be asked in March 2021 to approve the next stages of this support to reflect the ongoing need as the impact of the pandemic continues.

4. Overall numbers receiving support in 2020

The total number of people receiving grants for financial hardship during 2020 was 439, **an increase of 13 times compared to 2019.**

The pandemic has affected members around the world very differently, as different countries offer a varying degree of different schemes for support, with some countries offering no state support at all. Of those members we supported under our primary purpose, 72% were living in the UK & Ireland, and 28% in the rest of the world.

In total 931 people received support from the Fund in 2020. This includes those getting financial grants, a visit or telephone call from a volunteer, attending a workshop, receiving a service referral for specialist advice and the 14 members who regularly receive *Talking Chemistry World* (which we have continued to provide during the pandemic and our office closures).

5. Legal Advice Service and our Benefits and Debt Advice Service

We have continued to utilise the support provided by our legal advice referral provider, Law Express and our benefits and debt advice provider, Citizens Advice Manchester.

In 2020 we made 11 referrals to our legal advice providers. These were paid for specialist legal guidance on issues such as:

- Employment contract changes, including redundancy and furlough issues
- Eviction notice advice
- Complaint re medical misdiagnosis
- Immigration and visa advice

Through our welfare benefits and debt advice partnership with Citizens Advice Manchester this year we referred 6 new cases, with some ongoing from 2019:

- 10 members have had a cumulative confirmed gain in welfare benefits already received of £10,636.
- One beneficiaries' annual gain in benefits is projected to be £9,312.
- Another member has seen a projected financial gain of £3,104 per annum due to them receiving debt consolidation advice and a debt payment plan being put in place.

These two referral services are invaluable in supporting the holistic case work that we provide, enabling the Caseworkers to refer individual members for support in a timely manner and for beneficiaries to access specialist advice in relation to their individual circumstances.

6. Workshop Activity

We hosted five in-person workshops in early 2020 before the pandemic began, many with the invaluable support and help of RSC Local Sections. Due to COVID-19 some other sessions were unfortunately cancelled, and we developed online webinars with our providers. We adjusted the topics to meet the need of our members.

A total of 468 people attended a workshop in 2020 with topics including Wellbeing support, Managing anxiety, Finances when facing redundancy and Retirement planning.

Workshops and Webinars 2020		Attendees	Average per workshop
In-person workshops (up to March 2020)	5	81	16.2
Online workshop by webinar	8	387	48.3
Total	13	468	

The most popular workshop was the session on managing your personal finances during COVID-19, with 209 attendees; 100% of those completing the feedback survey agreeing that the Chemists' Community Fund should continue to provide support to members via webinars. Comments included:

"Thank you so much to RSC for having your members' backs and the thoughtfulness and consideration of members on likely challenges during this pandemic."

“Very much appreciated, please keep up the good work.”

By moving the workshops online we were able to continue to support members and the numbers attending each session rose from an average of 16 attendees for the face to face sessions in early 2020, to an average of 48 attendees for the online sessions.

7. Volunteer Update

Due to the pandemic and the need for social distancing we ceased our in-person volunteer visits from March 2020. These have continued in many cases as telephone befriending calls instead. For more recent applications for befriending support these have been established as telephone based. This has enabled us to utilise a wider pool for volunteers as geography within the UK has not been an issue when support is telephone based.

Befriending Visits – January to December 2020	
In-person volunteer visits	9
In-person staff visits	2
Telephone befriending calls	22
Total Number of Visits or calls	33

These visits and calls supported 13 individual beneficiaries.

In December 2020 we held a Volunteer update by Zoom which was well attended. This was followed up in February 2021 with specific telephone befriending and safeguarding training for volunteer Visitors.

8. Wellbeing and Listening Service Update

Following approval from the Fund’s Committee in late 2020 we will be launching a Wellbeing and Listening Service in 2021. This will enable the Fund to provide additional support to chemists when they need it, including some out of office hours support, with a particular focus in 2021 of supporting those impacted by the pandemic.

The service will enhance the holistic work that our Caseworkers provide to Members and the one to one befriending support offered by our dedicated trained volunteer visitors. The service aims to provide a listening service for those chemists who simply need someone to talk to, be that for those struggling with bereavement, job insecurity or isolation and loneliness. Onward referrals for other Fund support will of course then be made where relevant.

This service will be launched later in the spring and early summer, and we will ensure that our Fund Volunteers and Local Section Committees are kept up to date as we progress towards a launch date.

9. Awareness of the Support Available amongst Members

As the impact of the pandemic is likely to impact people's lives for some time to come, we ask all Regional Steering Group members to promote the support from the Fund to those in their networks who could benefit from confidentially receiving our holistic, listening and financial support.

***Anna Dearden, Chemists' Community Fund Manager,
March 2021***

Inclusion and Diversity Update

Key activities since September 2020:

- We launched our new RSC I&D strategy in December 2021: [rsc-inclusion-diversity-strategy-2025.pdf](#)
- We released our first biennial *Diversity Data report* – reporting on the diversity of RSC membership and the breadth of our activities: [rsc-diversity-data-report-2020.pdf](#)
- Our new LGBT+ toolkit of resources following on from our 2019 report *Exploring the workplace for LGBT+ physical scientists*: [LGBT+ toolkit \(rsc.org\)](#)
- Grants for Carers and assistance grants both with extended criteria related to Covid-19 and WFH arrangements: [Grants for carers \(rsc.org\)](#) and [Assistance Grants \(rsc.org\)](#)
- Bullying and harassment support [Bullying and harassment support \(rsc.org\)](#)
- Next round of Inclusion & Diversity Fund closes in April 2021: [Inclusion & Diversity Fund - Royal Society of Chemistry \(rsc.org\)](#)
- Organised webinar for International Women's Day (info below)

[Addressing Gender Parity across the Commonwealth](#) – 8 March 11.30 GMT

Delivered by Commonwealth Chemistry and Chemistry World to celebrate both International Women's Day and Commonwealth Day, *Addressing Gender Parity across the Commonwealth* will explore ways to overcome barriers that prevent women from fully participating in the chemical sciences. Our expert speakers will discuss:

- Perspective on gender issues throughout the Commonwealth and cultural challenges to attract and retain women in education and science.
- Gender inequality and its consequences in research culture, including gender bias in publishing.
- Policies on integrating diversity and gender equality from the perspective of a funding agency.

**Laura Norton, Senior Programme Manager, Inclusion & Diversity
March 2021**

Member Networks Update

Purpose of paper

To note an annual summary of the 2020 activity and financial reports.

1. Introduction

We define “member networks” as those networks that are entirely member-led by committees. Our current member networks are:

- Interest Groups (71)
- Local Sections (35 UK and ROI, 23 ROW)
- Analytical Division (AD) Regions (8)
- Education Division (ED) Regions (2)

With nearly 140 member networks in total, they are a valuable strength of the RSC; they amplify our efforts to advance the chemical sciences and provide direct support and connections to our diverse communities.

All member networks have the same basic/purpose:

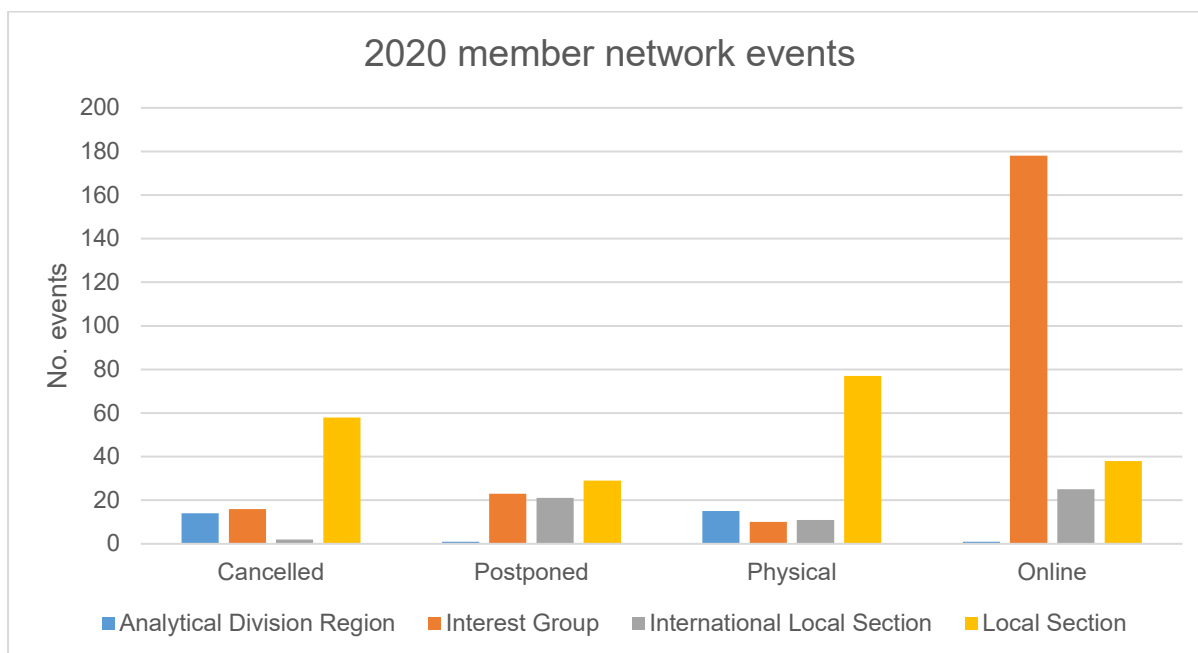
- to provide a focal point for, and to support, our members within their network,
- to advance the chemical sciences,
- to help us meet our charter objectives and strategy.

They are promoted as a member benefit for existing and prospective members and we encourage diversity in our committees.

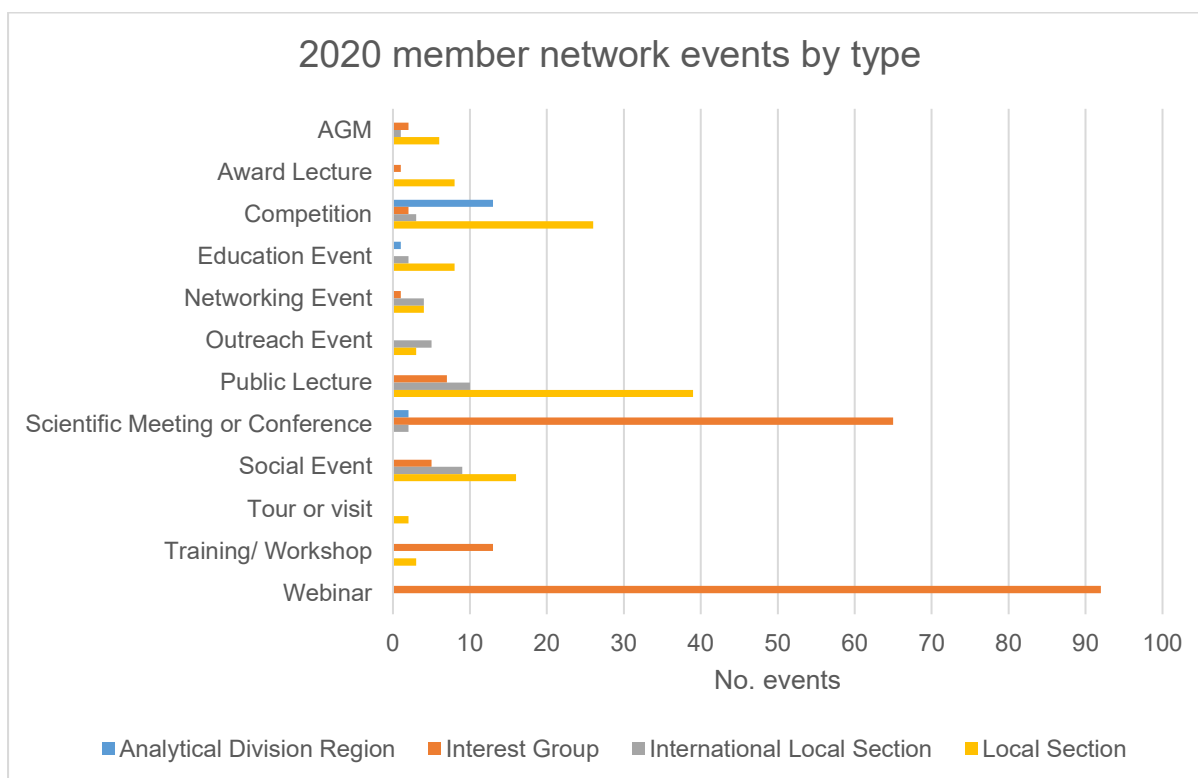
2. Activities

Following the national lock-downs due to COVID-19, in May 2020, our member networks were informed that all physical events run by our member networks must be cancelled until at least 31 August 2020. In August 2020, a further update was sent informing them that the RSC will be taking a virtual first approach to all activities until July 2021. As a result, the cancellation of physical member-led events was extended until 31 December 2020 with a strong recommendation to cancel physical events until July 2021. All member networks are asked to get in touch if they plan to hold a physical event in this period. At the time of writing, further guidance for 2021 is under review for Member Networks.

Despite this cancellation of planned physical events, overall our member networks have maintained a significant level of activities for our community by running over 350 events during 2020. As expected, beyond March 2020, the majority of these events were held online using a variety of platforms.

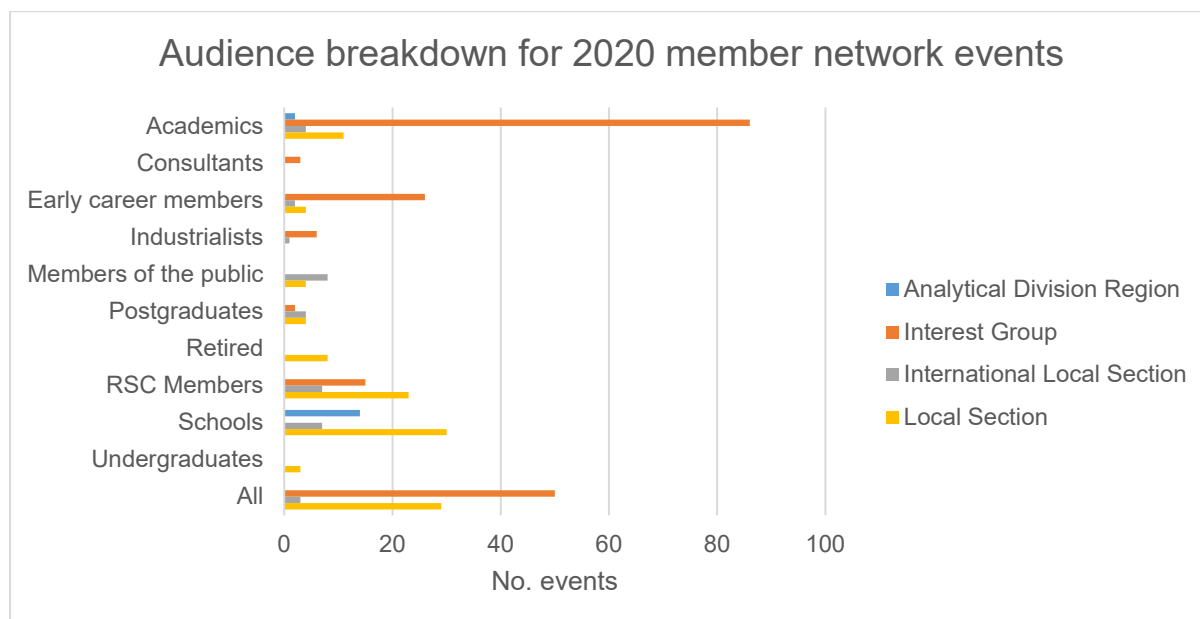


A number of Interest Groups turned their planned physical events into webinar series with 15 Interest Groups putting on 92 individual webinars throughout the year. Others maintained their multi-day conference model and ran online sessions on consecutive days. As the pandemic progressed, a number of Local Sections started to run social events online in addition to sending postcards to retired members. Only 22 Interest Groups (31%), 5 Local Sections (14%), two international Local Sections (9%) and two Analytical Division Regions (25%) reported that they could not run any activities during 2020.

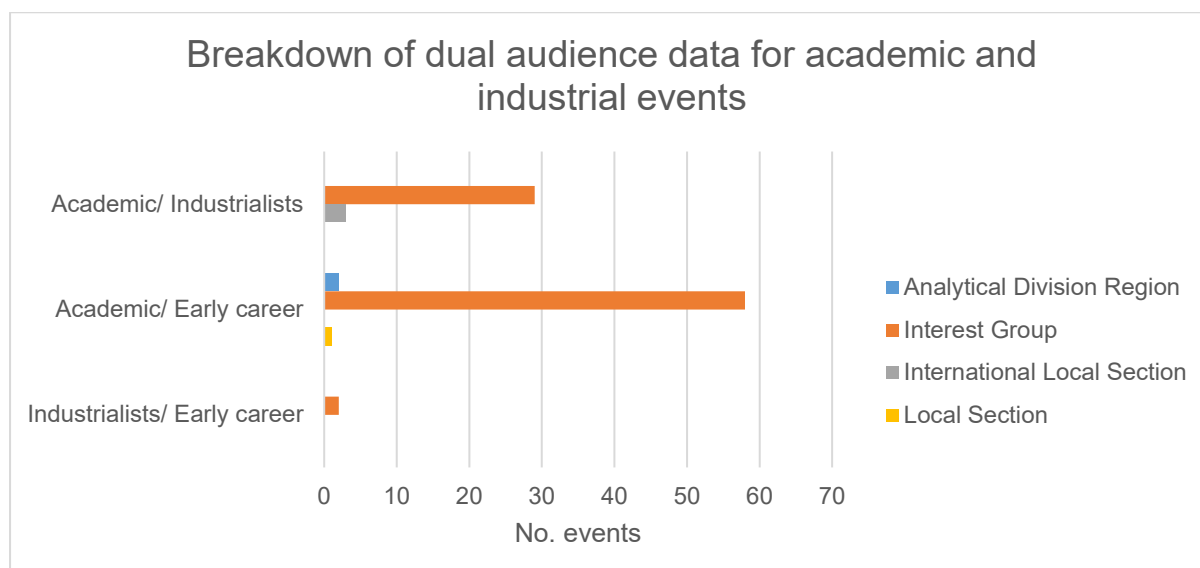


Some of the benefits of running online meetings noted by our volunteers included significant international attendance and delegates from a variety of sectors who would not have been able to attend a physical event.

In the past, many networks identified their events as being relevant to all audiences. To improve the data collected, in 2020, there was a limit of two audience types for each event. We asked our networks to report on the demographic of the audience who actually attended each event. Many selected, in no specified order, two main audience types with one of those being academics.



Upon more detailed interrogation of the data, it is notable that many events were attended by either both academic and industrial members or academic and early career members.



Due to the cancellation of the Member Networks Conference, we held the Interest Group Forum online. We also held a series of themed discussion workshops to replace the

sessions we would typically have held at the conference. The Regional Steering Group meetings also took place twice per year, but online.

The Interest Group Forum was attended by at least one committee member of each of our 71 Interest Groups, something that has never happened at a physical meeting, and in total 168 members took part in the meeting. In addition to discussions on collaborations and sharing their experiences during the pandemic, members received the outputs of the members' survey, an update on the Divisions Review, with the opportunity to comment on how they would like to connect, and an update on our work to improve our online community offering, with the opportunity to input.

***Fiona McMillan, Member Networks Manager
March 2021***