



Guide to running an event

A British Science Association programme. Registered charity no. 212479 and SC039236.

Organising a British Science Week event can be fun, and it doesn't have to take up a huge amount of your time. If you don't have much experience, don't worry – we have resources to make your job easier! For starters, we've put together a few of our top tips to help you plan and organise your own event.

There are no restrictions on your event in terms of topics, venue, format or audience. All we ask is that...

- a) ... it **engages** as many people as possible with science
- b) ... you **let us know what your plans are**, whether it is a quiz for your pupils during your lunch break or a full scale science festival for your whole city!

Plan your event

1. What's your main objective?

First of all, you have to consider what is the main objective that you want to achieve by running this event. Do you hope to achieve something for...

- ... yourself?
- ... your organisation?
- ... the presenters?
- ... the participants?
- ... science?

Throughout your planning, remember to bear your objective in mind, as this will be very important when making other decisions. This will also help you identify your target audience(s).

2. Who do you want to influence?

Identifying your target audience is an important step in developing your event and is essential to your publicity campaign. Consider your aims and think about the people you may wish to influence. Which audiences fit the bill? Are you looking for...

- ... new audiences?
 - ... local audiences?
 - ... specialist interest groups?
 - ... schools?
 - ... children?
 - ... adults?
 - ... families?
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Once you have a target audience you need to make sure that you supply them with all the information and facilities they need to enjoy the event. Some things you might want to consider when planning the event are:

- **Booking systems** –do they need to book/pay? If so, how and when?
- Check the **information sent out to confirm bookings**. Is everything clear?
- **How will they know where to go?** Produce signs/maps and information on parking, public transport, walking distances and disabled access.
- If **children are coming**, do they need to be accompanied by adults?
- **How long is the event?** Will people need access to toilet facilities?
- Consider **audience comfort**—furniture, refreshments, room temperature

3. What will be the content of your event?

You will need to consider the subject matter, theme and format of your event. What type of event would your target audience be interested in? Ideas and inspiration can be found almost anywhere. Here are a few suggestions:

- Previous events – case studies are available on our website (www.britishtscienceweek.org/plan/case-studies)
- Our free activity resources (www.britishtscienceweek.org/plan/activity-packs)
- Topical issues in the media (magazines, radio, television, internet, etc.)

Science can be explored through formats ranging from hands-on activities to tours of places of interest—the only limit is your imagination! Some popular event formats include the following elements:

- Hands-on activities
- Public discussions
- Demonstrations
- Exhibitions/displays
- Talks/presentations

Tip: the simplest ideas are often the best!

Generate several ideas, analyse their relative strengths and select the strongest combination of subject, theme and format, taking into consideration your aims and target audience.

4. What's your budget?

How much budget do you have? Will it cover what you want to do?

It is important to produce a detailed cost plan for your event. Try to minimise costs and make sure you know your maximum budget. The budget sheet at the back of this booklet may help with your initial planning.

If you don't have much budget, think about possible local sponsors that can contribute to the event. For more information on how to approach sponsors or which

grants may be available to you, see our *BSW Guide to Funding* (www.britishtscienceweek.org/plan/how-to-guides).

Tip: remember to leave a contingency!

Income can be also generated through admission fees, grants and donations. If you decide to charge an admission fee, will tickets be sold in advance, on the door or both? What equipment will you need to process payments—will you accept credit cards/cheques/cash? If you will be handling cash, don't forget to ensure there is adequate security for you and the money.

5. Where is it going to take place?

Events can take place at absolutely any type of venue including your home, school, work, or in a public place (such as a shopping centre). Event can be in small rooms, whole buildings or outdoors. They can even take place in cyberspace. How much space do you need? What shaped space do you need? Do you need lots of small areas or one large open area?

You will need to choose a venue suitable for both the event format and the expected audience. Take some time to plan the setup of the room(s) in advance and build a good relationship with the venue staff and presenters.

Here are some important things to bear in mind:

- **Book the venue for longer than the event**—you will need time to set up and clean up
- **Check accessibility**—will you need signs/door stops? Is there disabled access?
- How will you get staff and equipment to the venue? Do you need to arrange transport?
- **Check what equipment/facilities are needed and who will provide them**—some scientific equipment may be covered by safety regulations. Check that electrical supplies are adequate.
- **Check layout**—are you using the best arrangement for your event? What type of seating arrangement would best suit your event format?
- Learn the **occupational health and safety procedures** and fire regulations for the building.
- Will **public liability insurance** be covered by the venue or do you need to arrange it?

6. When are you holding the event?

British Science Week takes place over ten days every March. Your target audience may dictate the timing of your event—e.g., schools will come during weekdays, families will come at weekends. Consider who will be coming when you choose the day and time for your event!

Tip: make sure you have left enough time to organise and market the event!

Remember to **check if there are other events taking place near you at the same time**, as this can affect people's attendance.

7. Human resources

Do you have enough people to run your activity? If not, think who else could help, or consider scaling down the event.

If you need a presenter for your event, a good place to look is our webpage of online directories of science presenters (www.britishtscienceweek.org/plan/find-a-presenter).

Here are some things to bear in mind when organising your human resources:

- Consider **how presenters will interact** with your target audience
- **Book presenters well in advance**, liaise with them in the venue and schedule arrangements
- Provide all staff (including presenters) with **session times and audience profiles** in advance
- **Brief staff** so that they are confident with their roles and responsibilities (e.g., provide them with a crib sheet)
- A **good chairperson** can make an event. Who would work well with the format of your event?
- **Staff comfort**—if it's a large event, would a staff common room be useful?

8. Anything else

Could anything prevent the staff or the participants from getting to the venue and enjoying the event (e.g., strikes or inadequate directions)?

- Think about risk assessments, first aid cover, fire regulations, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS, previously CRB) checks (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service)
- What is your **margin of error**? Some events will be more flexible than others.
- Do you have adequate **support**—practical, technical and psychological?
- Have a **Plan B**—if it rains, if the speaker doesn't arrive, etc.
- Above all, **EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED!**

Tip: being ambitious is great, but it's also important to be aware of your limitations!

Promote your event

Your publicity campaign will be crucial to the success of your event, and how you market the event will depend on the event itself and who you wish to attract.

What can you do?

- **Register your event** on the British Science Week online programme (www.britishscienceweek.org/register)
- Send out press releases
- Make flyers and posters
- Send a mailout to attract participants.

Tip: keep it simple!

Think about who you are targeting and how they will best receive information.

You will need to get a good head start on your marketing campaign, so to help you on your way check out the BSW *Guide to Publicity* (www.britishscienceweek.org/plan/how-to-guides).

Let people know as far in advance as possible so that they can get organised. It's also important to make sure that people understand what will happen during the event and how they can take part. Also, remind them it's happening in the run-up – think about how many times you have to be reminded about things before you remember!

Acknowledgements

The British Science Association would be very appreciative if you were able to acknowledge British Science Week in any promotional material you create. This could be done by either just mentioning BSW or by downloading our logo from the website (www.britishscienceweek.org/plan/bsw-goodies). Our logo was created so that events and their organisers can easily be recognised as participants of National Science & Engineering Week. This will provide a greater sense of ownership of the week as well as helping to spread awareness of the initiative.

Run the event

On the day

Before the event

Arrive with plenty of time and with plenty of people. Ensure signs, furniture, equipment and facilities are correctly set up and working. Allow enough time for you to get everything ready and to be relaxed before people begin to arrive.

During the event

Monitor the event and be ready to activate your Plan B if anything goes wrong.

After the event

Ensure the clean-up operation is effective. Arrange for all furniture, equipment and materials to be returned to their proper places. Thank all staff and presenters. Complete any necessary financial transactions.

Follow up after the event

Here are some important things to keep in mind for after your event:

- Make sure you **thank everyone** involved
 - **Capture the names and contact details** of your attendees so that you can target them to attend future events.
 - **Feedback** after the event is useful for evaluation purposes and for future planning. Considering collecting this information via feedback forms:
 - Who came? Are they the people you targeted?
 - Did they enjoy the event?
 - How successful was your publicity campaign?
 - Did people find the venue easily?
 - Was there sufficiently clear information sent out beforehand?
 - Were the presenters appropriate?
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