

# The Year in Review

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**WISE Annual Report** April 2020 - March 2021





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# A message from the WISE CEO



“Stepping into any new role is exciting. It brings opportunities to make connections, to learn new practices, and in the best case to make a genuine difference to the world. This is especially true when working for an organisation like WISE whose objectives aim to help address some of the biggest challenges we face today..

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated just how important STEM is to a well-functioning society. From healthcare scientists, researchers and lab technicians, to engineers, chemists and data analysts, the STEM sector has been at the forefront of the response to the pandemic. However, to shape solutions that work for as many people as possible, it is crucial that this sector reflects our wider society with its diversity of thought, experience and backgrounds.

In 2020, WISE celebrated more than 1 million women working in core-STEM within the UK for the first time. The figure increased from 1,024,000 in September 2019 to 1,102,425 by September 2020 and the percentage of women as part of this workforce increased from 23.4% to 24.2% during that period. When we consider that the pandemic disproportionately affected women – with many forced to take on homeschooling responsibilities – this increase is cause for celebration. However, there is still much work to be done.

To better understand the impact of COVID-19 on women working in STEM, we surveyed women from across the UK between December 2020 and January 2021. The 400 responses we received made it clear that WISE's objectives matter. In addition to citing

flexible working as important to continued progression (reported by 72% of respondents), women also confirmed the importance of transparency of progression (90%), training and retraining opportunities (82%) and inclusive workplace cultures (90%). These points align with areas identified as important by our *Ten Steps* change management framework.

By providing topical content, a dedicated COVID members portal, and 23 online events attended by over 1,300 people, we continued to support our members and women in STEM throughout 2020 and into 2021. We were thrilled to welcome many new members into our WISE network.

Women currently account for 24.2% of the UK Core-STEM workforce. At WISE, a key goal is to achieve 30% female representation in STEM by 2030. This requires active measures such as those outlined by our *Ten Steps* framework to ensure we move towards a representative balance across this critical sector.

**Kay Hussain**  
WISE CEO



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# The WISE Effect

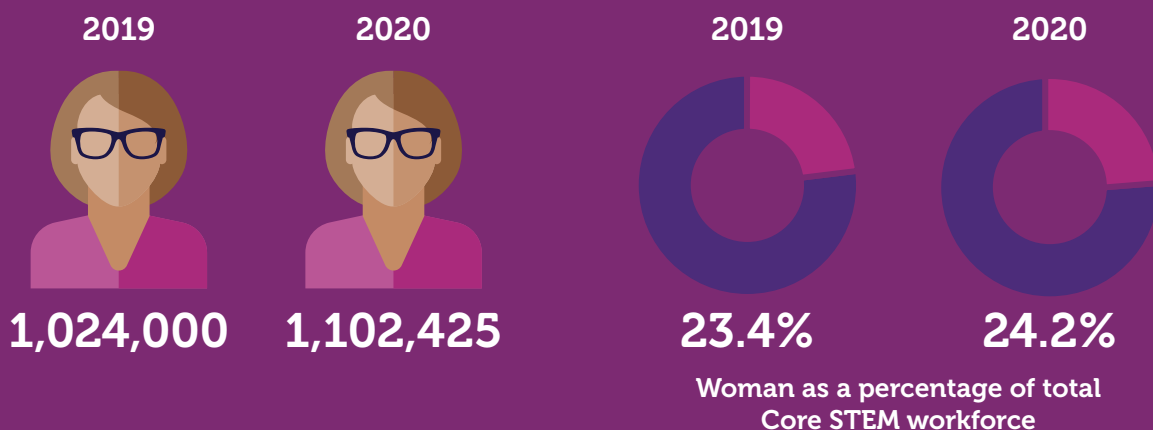
The number of women in Core-STEM roles has grown steadily – up 11% on September 2019, and up 28% from the 2016 figure of 802,848\*.

Girls taking A-Level maths doubled between 2002 and 2021 (the number is currently 38,016), while the number of girls taking A-Level computer science has increased significantly in recent years from 456 in 2016 to 2,031 in 2021. The ongoing rise in the number of girls taking GCSEs in core-STEM single science subjects is positive too.

While we are proud to have played a part in these improvements, there is still much to be done. As COVID-19 has proven, STEM is essential to our society. It is therefore crucial that numbers of girls and women in STEM continue to grow.

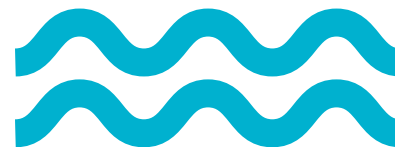
\*As of September 2020.

## Women in Core STEM Occupations 2019-2020





# WISE Member Services



Although 2020/21 was a difficult year for many, we are pleased to report that WISE continued to grow during this time.

We welcomed many new members to our network, increasing the total to its highest number yet. The 77.4% renewal rate during a time when many of our members were struggling to maintain business as usual is testament to the benefits they receive from our initiatives and insights.

Number  
of  
new members

42

Member  
renewal  
rate

77.4%

## Ten Steps



Examples of feedback included the following:

*"The workshop was thought provoking, expertly facilitated and very helpful."*

Thames Water

*"A positive experience - good to see case studies of other organisations and how they are tackling the issue."*

Lloyds Bank

*"Great session, adapted to our requirements and requests."*

HSBC

The number of WISE *Ten Steps* signatories increased by 12% overall during 2020/21. Following member requests we expanded our programme to include three new workshops aimed at senior executives, experienced professionals (e.g. leaders of business units/global teams), and diversity and inclusion experts.



## Benchmarking Tool

Following member feedback we launched a Benchmarking Tool in the summer of 2021. The online diagnostic provides personalised results for members as well as tailored case studies and best practices to help with the areas that they find most difficult. Signatories can download reports and collate diagnostics as well as invite employees to complete the questionnaire.

The Benchmarking Tool provides:

- Automatic data collation and submission for *Measuring Progress* events and *Ten Steps* workshops
- Personalised reporting
- Access to targeted best practices and case studies
- Year-on-year comparison and progress tracking with previous data submissions.

## Measuring Progress event 2020

The *Measuring Progress* event continued to grow, with 70 business leaders attending in 2020 compared with 43 in 2019, a 39% increase year on year. This marked the biggest attendance since the first event in 2014. Members found the breakout-room sessions particularly useful and we received several requests for further interactive sessions. As a result, WISE now holds quarterly knowledge sharing events (KSEs) focusing



specifically on the *Ten Steps* and sharing best practices. To date we have hosted 33 companies and welcomed 69 attendees to these events.

### Examples of feedback from the 2020 *Measuring Progress* event included the following:

*"Being able to benchmark where we were/where we are, has really helped us demonstrate our progress and provide the business case for those who need it."*

*"The Ten Steps metric has helped us to further assess and measure how we have achieved this and where we can focus efforts moving forward to attract, retain and develop the best available talent."*

*"The breakout rooms and getting to meet other people from other organisations was so useful. It really helped us understand what they are doing to promote gender balance."*

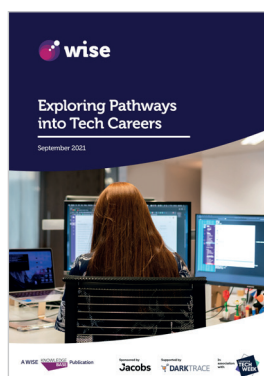


## Best practices and case studies

To support the *Ten Steps* framework, we regularly create case studies and best practices. There are currently over 70 on the site and many more in the pipeline. Each case study is allocated to one of the *Ten Steps* and looks at work done, challenges faced, and outcomes achieved. They aim to help members tackle D&I projects without having to reinvent the wheel every time.

## Tech Research survey

We recently published a report on the findings of our Tech Research survey – this was presented at London Tech Week in September 2021.



## Workshops and training – Introduction to Diversity and Inclusion

In response to member requests for bespoke sessions and training, WISE developed a new *Introduction to Diversity and Inclusion* workshop. Since its launch in July 2020, we have delivered over 20 sessions.

**Examples of feedback from the WISE Introduction to Diversity and Inclusion workshop included the following:**

*“ Well presented, strong content, good presenters who are passionate and well versed about the topic.”*

*“ The content was well delivered and the breakout groups were great.”*

*“ A very clear message by speakers and good statistics shown.”*





# WISE events

As part of the WISE Online Event Programme 2020/21, WISE hosted 23 online events attended by over 1,300 people.

Alongside the annual *Ten Steps Measuring Progress* event, WISE hosted 11 member-only events attended by over 650 people. These covered topics such as stereotypes and microaggressions, attracting female students into STEM, intersectionality in gender balance and the culture of flexible working.

**Examples of feedback on WISE events was largely anonymous but included the following:**

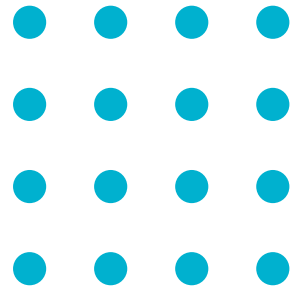
*"Very informative. I can certainly share these initiatives with my organisation."*

*"Eye opening and insightful, especially with regards to understanding the different types of bias in the science and teaching industry and how micro-aggressions are expressed; I also reflected upon my own behaviour and how I will seek to change it."*

*"Informative and a brilliant forum for ideas."*



# WISE Online Conference 2021



Our conference took place in March 2021 around the themes of inclusivity, transformation and sustainability. Originally scheduled to coincide with October's UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), the event was delayed owing to the pandemic.

The event explored how diversity can help drive sustainability and the fight against climate change. We were joined by 430 delegates for two days of presentations, panels, and workshops. This marked a 12% increase on 2019's delegate number and was our best attended conference to date.

Topics included allyship and finding a mentor, women making a difference in climate change, and outreach with a green theme. It provided a great deal to think about, as well as practical advice for delegates to take back to their workplaces.

The anonymous feedback included the following quotes and tweets:

*"I had a brilliant experience, and it was great to be a part of the day."*



CCCUEdgeHub  
@CCCUEdgeHub

Inspiring session from the WISE Young Professionals Board talking about the importance of role models, mentors and sustainability agenda!  
[#WISEConference2021](#) [#IWD2021](#) [#WomenInSTEM](#)

11:53 AM · Mar 9, 2021 · Twitter Web App



Priyanka Datta  
@datta\_pri

[#WISEConference2021](#) a great set of workshops and topics selected. Loving the workshops !!!

11:58 AM · Mar 9, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

*"Great conference, especially loved the workshops, lots of positive tips and also thought it really important to see the theme of sustainability linked with gender."*

*"The range of topics was great. I thought the delivery was clear and engaging."*





# A significant year

2020/21 was a significant year in many ways. In addition to marking 20 years of WISE patronage by HRH, The Princess Royal, our members dealt with an unprecedented pandemic which saw up to 40% of the workforce working from home in 2020, compared with 13% in 2019.\*

This move to flexible working shows that change can happen at pace where circumstances make it necessary.

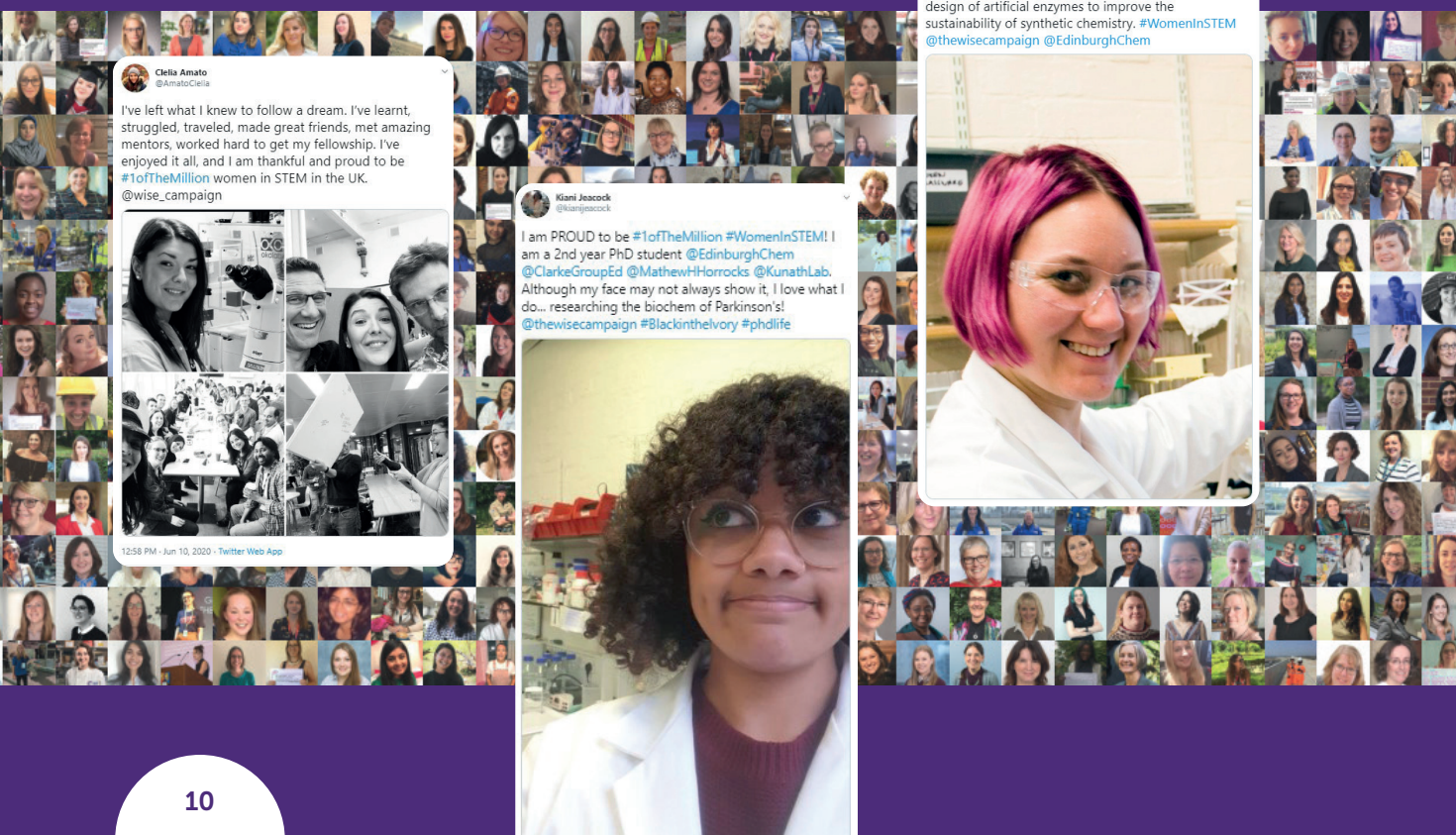
2019/20 saw us reach the milestone of more than 1 million women in the Core-STEM UK workforce and we celebrated this by launching the 1 of The Million campaign in April 2020. This year long, nationwide campaign showcased stories of diverse women in the sector.

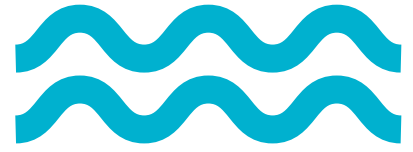
By putting a face to these workers we hoped to inspire women and girls to imagine themselves in similar professions. The

campaign's year-long run ended in April 2021, and we were proud of the reach and visibility achieved.

Thanks to the support of our sponsors (Lloyds Banking Group, RAF Engineering, AWE and BAM Nuttall) the campaign engaged many women across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. We received support from individual women in STEM, organisations within the STEM sector, and WISE's patron, HRH The Princess Royal, who attended the launch of our 1 of The Million celebration video event.

\* ONS survey.





# The WISE 20

In December 2020, as part of our 1 of the Million campaign, we asked a leading group of organisations, gender balance allies, and women in STEM to share their stories around diversity and inclusion. We turned these interviews into a series of inspirational videos and launched them at a celebration event with HRH, The Princess Royal, in February.



**Maggie Aderin-Pocock**  
MBE  
Scientist, Broadcaster  
and Honorary Research  
Associate at University  
College London



**Prof Helen Atkinson**  
CBE  
Pro-Vice-Chancellor of  
Cranfield University's School  
of Aerospace, Transport and  
Manufacturing



**Dr Jackie Bell**  
Senior Teaching Fellow in  
Equality, Diversity, Outreach  
& Public Engagement,  
Imperial College London



**Dr Bhavagaya Bakshi**  
NHS GP and Co-Founder,  
C The Signs



**Dawn Bonfield** MBE  
Royal Academy of Engineering  
Visiting Professor and Aston  
University UK Representative



**Kathryn Boulton-Pratt**  
Retired Assistant Head,  
formerly GDST



**Costain**



**Temilolu Danso**  
Graduate Engineer,  
JLR



**Zeb Farooq**  
Bid Manager,  
Jacobs



**Eniola Fujamade**  
Associate Technical Process  
Professional, KBR



**Amelia Gould**  
Naval Ships Combat  
Systems Director,  
BAE Systems



**Jia-Yan Gu**  
Principal Engineer,  
NatWest



**Barbara Jones**  
Director,  
StrawWorks Ltd



**Tom Jones**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Nuvia Limited



**Dervilla Mitchell**  
Executive Chair of ARUP  
UKIMEA Region and Member  
of ARUP Global Board



**Network Rail**



**Prof Yamni Nigam**  
Professor and Scientist,  
Swansea University



**Dr Marily Nika**  
Speech AI Product Manager,  
Google



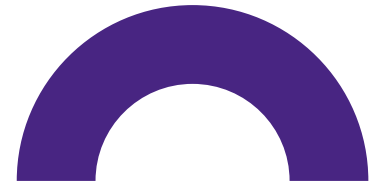
**Maggie Philbin** OBE  
Broadcaster and  
CEO, TeenTech



**Renee Watson**  
Founder,  
The Curiosity Box



# My Skills My Life



WISE continued to build upon *My Skills My Life* in 2020/21 and we created a number of additional resources to enable the delivery of online sessions. The *My Skills My Life* platform currently features over 1,000 role models.

We partnered with the Raspberry Pi Foundation, the Behavioural Insights Team, STEM Learning, BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, and Apps for Good, to deliver an initiative called *Gender Balance In Computing*. As part of the drive, we plan to trial *My Skills My Life* within primary schools. This will challenge stereotypes by showing girls inspirational tech role models with whom they may have traits in common. The project was postponed owing to COVID-19, and sessions will now run in the Autumn term 2021.

*"I liked the personality quiz and being able to see role models with similar personalities to me."*

Dilani Selvanathan, one of our role models



**Dilani Selvanathan**

Software Engineering Apprentice,  
BBC Design & Engineering



Every day at work I use my creativity to solve problems and work with my team.



Communicator



Campaigner



Coordinator



# CSO Leadership Development Programme

The first year of the Chief Scientific Officer's WISE Healthcare Science Leadership Development Programme concluded in September 2020.

The programme provided 32 women with the opportunity to accelerate their career as 'Aspiring Leaders'. The final element of the programme asked the cohort to plan and deliver an impactful project using their passion for healthcare science combined with the leadership skills acquired on the course.

**We received the following feedback on the programme:**

*"I feel empowered to face challenges and pursue opportunities that I believe in."*

*"I have learnt a lot about myself and recognise my strengths and weaknesses with regards to leadership. I have learnt what good qualities are required from a leader and aspire to have these!"*

*"The scheme has improved my confidence in a way I didn't know I was capable of."*



# WISE Ambassadors



Our WISE Ambassadors are an inspiring group of influential women that aim to encourage women and girls into STEM by participating in industry events and activities. Unfortunately, the programme was put on hold in 2020/21 as a result of the pandemic, but several existing ambassadors have played a key role in the fight against COVID-19.

**Professor Sue Hill**, Chief Scientific Officer for England, provided professional leadership and expert clinical advice by sharing accurate information on COVID-19 via webinars to healthcare staff.



In 2022, we will run an awards ceremony called *COVID Unsung Heroes, Women in STEM* to celebrate the work of women that were instrumental in the fight against the virus.

Separately, several Northern-Ireland based ambassadors played a key role in establishing the NI WISE Hub in conjunction with the Department for Economy.

**Angela McFarlane**, Senior Market Development Director for human data sciences company IQVIA, led several initiatives to support COVID-19 government industry partnerships. These included the ONS COVID-19 infection surveillance programme.



**Brigadier Sara Sharkey** was awarded a CBE in the Queen's birthday honours list this year for her work on the 'Defence Digital's Agile Delivery Cell'. This project delivered speedy remote digital capabilities to the army helping it to support other critical services.



Pictured in the above photograph are our WISE Ambassadors in 2020-21 – from left to right: Vivienne Parry; Angela McFarlane; Professor Eileen Harkin-Jones OBE; Dr Hayaatun Sillem CBE; Jacky Wright; Emer Murnaghan OBE; Professor Dame Sue Hill OBE; Professor Tara Moore; Professor Julia Buckingham CBE; Dr Alison Vincent; Dr Nina Skorupska CBE; Cait O'Riordan; Dr Emily Lawson; and Professor Carole Mundell.



# Northern Ireland WISE Hub

In the first quarter of 2021, we established the Northern Ireland WISE Hub. The aim was to boost STEM gender balance in the region by encouraging more girls into STEM education and employment, and to provide support to STEM employers looking to boost diversity and inclusion in their workforce.

To date, all events and activity around the project have been held online owing to the pandemic. This activity has already created a strong and enduring community.

In the first half of 2021, The Hub held a number of events with over 200 attendees in total, as well as several *My Skills My Life*

sessions with local primary schools. It also added 41 new role models from Northern Ireland to the platform. There are currently 49 organisations and employers connected to the Hub which hosts tailored resources for employers, role models and outreach organisations.



# WISE Young Professionals' Board Achievements 2020-21



By **Krystal Richards**

*Associate Broadcast Engineer, WarnerMedia CNN  
and Chair of the WISE Young Professionals' Board 2021*



Over the last 12 months, the WYPB has continued to advocate for and inspire the next generation of women and girls in STEM. Four new members joined the board with this goal: Isobel Vernon-Avery (Arup), Kathryn Malcolm (AstraZeneca), Krystal Richards (WarnerMedia CNN) and Maddie Groves (CGL).

Several members of the WYPB were recognised as outstanding women in STEM, including Frida Nzaba, who won the *EveryWoman in Tech Rising Star* award. Similarly, Beth Probert was a finalist for the

prestigious IET Young Engineering Woman award and Halimatu Abubakar was a highly commended finalist for *WES 50 Women In Engineering 2021*.

The WYPB also increased its social media following by 1,400 across platforms. Our *#WISEWoman* series shone a weekly spotlight on female role models from minority communities – 32 individuals took part and the series generated over 2,000 interactions. Our reach increased to include a new Alumni Network, a community of individuals passionate about making change.



**Halimatu Abubakar**  
Support Engineer,  
Collins Aerospace



**Hazel Atkins**  
Senior Data Scientist,  
BMT



**Maddie Groves**  
Senior Geotechnical  
Engineer,  
CGL



**Alexandra Lawson**  
Segal Hydrocarbon  
Scheduler,  
Shell UK



**Rachel Lord**  
Lecturer in Sport &  
Exercise Physiology, Cardiff  
Metropolitan University



**Kathryn Malcolm**  
Graduate Engineer,  
AstraZeneca



**Frida Nzaba**  
Manufacturing Engineer,  
Rolls-Royce



**Josiah O'Brien**  
Graduate Physicist,  
AWE



**Beth Probert**  
Software Engineer,  
Altran UK



**Gisela Rossi**  
Engineering Lead,  
Pollen



**Abigail Seager**  
Senior Systems  
Engineer,  
BBC



**Isobel Vernon-Avery**  
Consultant,  
ARUP





Our annual competition was a great success. This year's code breaking challenge saw over 150 entries and received fantastic feedback from parents, teachers and entrants alike.

The 2021 WISE conference session hosted by the WYPB discussed the eco-gender gap. Panel members shared their thoughts on why women are driving sustainability and we felt this might be a new concept for many attendees.

WYPB also benefitted from a fantastic strengths training session delivered by Consulting Women. We learnt about how we might use our strengths to maximise our impact as a team, something the board will use to champion women in STEM.

Once again, the WYPB has been busy with its outreach work. WYPB members delivered over 30 talks to national and international audiences including publishers, MPs, WISE members, schools, and others with an interest in diversity in STEM.

Reflecting on the past 12 months, the WYPB's passion and drive to create change is clear. I became chair of the WYPB in July and would like to congratulate the previous chair, Hazel Atkins, on her successful tenure. She undoubtedly made a huge contribution towards improving the gender balance in STEM.



# New team members at WISE

The WISE team is critical to driving gender balance in the UK core-STEM workplace. Our dedicated staff provide an extensive range of experience to help our members and partners improve diversity in STEM. We asked our new team members why they chose to join WISE.

*"Having worked for various businesses in a marketing role ensuring business objectives were met, my goal now is to help WISE to accelerate cultural change with our members, increase WISE's reach and impact and support gender balance in STEM industries."*



**Darren Moulds**  
Interim Head of Marketing



**Nicola Brittain**  
Business Content Writer

*"I applied to WISE because in my previous career as a technology and business journalist I was very aware of a gender imbalance in STEM – I wanted to help address this. Working for WISE fits with my values and goals."*

*"I wanted to work with WISE to truly understand what it would mean to be an ally – my journey has been life changing so far and long may it continue."*



**Shaun Vyfhuis**  
Business Development  
Manager

# Finances

WISE is committed to maintaining financial sustainability through its high-quality services.

## Total Revenue

2020 to 2021

£1.02m

## Breakdown

Membership

£543k

Projects

£342k

Awards & Events

£105k

Job Advertising

£31k

## Reserves

↑ 3%

A strong financial position is essential to ensuring that WISE continues to help create a better gender balance in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) professions.

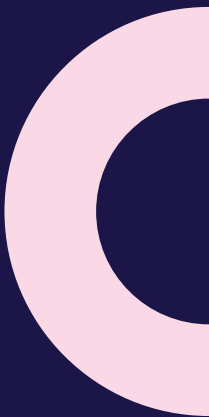
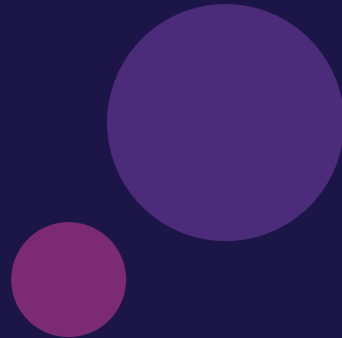
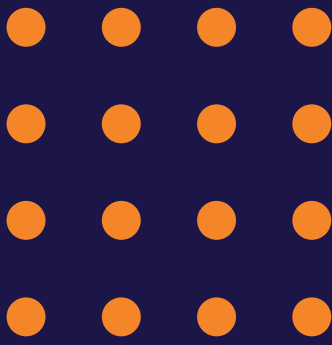
When the COVID-19 pandemic hit we assessed the potential challenges this would pose and adapted our services accordingly. A revised break-even budget was implemented to safeguard the company's position during these unprecedented times. We made use of the government's furlough scheme for a short period and all previous face-to-face services were made virtual where possible, with the exceptions obviously impacting revenue to some extent.

## Membership

↑ 7%

Despite this difficult backdrop, WISE had a successful year thanks to the continued support from members and partners, and the unwavering commitment of our team and stakeholders.

Membership grew 7%, reserves increased 3%, and we achieved a positive variance versus budget. Investment also continued with specific commitments around the development of a new website, a new benchmarking tool to support our *Ten Steps* programme, and further expansion of team capability.



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