



BA SCIENCE COMMUNICATION CONFERENCE

Engaging with Policy for the Purpose of Explaining Science

(Delivered as part of the Newton's Heirs programme by Newton's Apple)

As part of this year's BA Science Communication Conference, science communicators, academics and journalists from across the country took part in the Newton's Apple workshop 'Engaging in Policy with the Purpose of Explaining Science'.



The session, chaired by Alok Jha (*Guardian Science Correspondent*), allowed the conference audience to question and debate with four guest panellists; Dr Stephen Axford and Dr Anthony Whitehead (*Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills*), Nick Dusic (*Director of the Campaign for Science and Engineering*) and Dr Ian Gibson MP, on the matter of engaging the public with science policy.

Questions covered ranged from, whether public opinion should be considered when making science policy decisions, to how Parliament balances public opinion with scientific evidence in current debates, such as that on Hybrid Embryos.

The good work conducted by the Science Media Centre in providing accurate scientific information to the public was highlighted.

However, it was proposed that public confidence and understanding of science and its benefits could be increased by improving access to more balanced scientific information, perhaps with more specialist science journalists tackling science policy stories in place of the mainstream and policy journalists who currently tend to cover such issues.



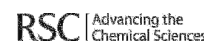
Public engagement with science was also seen as vital to society, especially since public money is involved in research. However, the audience believed that decisions over what type of science is funded should not be left to the public.



Newton's Apple would like to thank the sponsors of the workshop:



BioIndustry Association



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And the British Association for Advancement of Science for hosting the session:



For more information on Newton's Apple, and the Newton's Heirs programme, see the website: www.newtons-apple.org.uk