

Newsletter Issue 2

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Update on Public Dialogue Learning Centre

We are delighted to announce that it has been decided by OSI to begin the development of a learning resource centre through the current Sciencewise programme.

A major part of the current Sciencewise programme is to build capacity within Government to do dialogue by developing and disseminating case studies via the website, capturing learning from successful engagement activities and building and sharing best practice. The decision to develop the learning resource centre offers the Sciencewise community an opportunity to build on its existing work and to develop a wider learning resource to assist those involved in policy and decision-making on science and technology related issues. This decision has been soundly endorsed by the announcement this week in the Chancellor's pre-Budget report, which said:

"The Government's goal is for the UK public to be confident about the governance, regulation and use of science and technology - by both government and business - and to be actively engaged in scientific debate. To build on the progress made in this area through the Sciencewise Programme, the Government will establish an Expert Resource Centre for Public Dialogue on Science and Innovation to assist all parts of government in enabling public debate on science and technology-related topics. The Centre will develop and disseminate good practice on public dialogue across government and its non-departmental public bodies, resulting in a culture where public dialogue is seen as a

fundamental part of science and technology policy development".

Sciencewise will therefore be re-focussed from January 2007 to incorporate a number of learning resource centre activities, as identified by a recent scoping study and discussions with other science and technology stakeholders. These will include expansion of the Sciencewise information bank, development of further cross-department links to promote the learning resource as an "exemplar" of good dialogue practice, and development of a "learning network" to draw in policy makers and practitioners. In addition, the proposal is to further widen the scope of the programme by outsourcing some specific functions or activities.

Policy Makers

If you are a policy maker and have a science and technology issue that may be informed by public dialogue and would like advice, please contact Alison Crowther by e-mail: alison.crowther@aeat.co.uk or by telephone on **0774 965 7665**.

More Information

For more information about the Sciencewise programme, please contact Beth Chesney-Evans by e-mail: beth.chesney-evans@aeat.co.uk or by telephone on **0870 190 6072**.

Looking to the challenges of the future with Horizon Scans

A challenging set of research papers looking up to 50 years ahead, and commissioned by the Government's Horizon Scanning Centre, was released on 20th December by the futures experts, Outsights-IpsosMORI partnership and the American-based Institute for the Future (ITF).

The two Scans – entitled Sigma and Delta - look forward at emerging trends, potential new issues, opportunities and threats, and the possible implications for society.

The Delta Scan contains 100 short papers exploring expert views on the future in science and technology. The broader Sigma Scan contains 146 short papers drawing comprehensively on current futures work, which is research aimed at identifying future issues and trends across the entire public policy spectrum.

The Government's Chief Scientific Adviser Sir David King, who oversees the work of the Horizon Scanning Centre, said:

"These Scans are tools for Government to identify risks and opportunities in the future".

"We're not in the business of predicting the future, but we do need to explore the broadest range of different possibilities to help ensure government is prepared in the long-term and considers issues across the spectrum in its planning".

"The Scans are aimed at stimulating debate and critical discussion to enhance government's short and long term policy and strategy".

The Scans reflect the Government's commitment to forward-looking strategic approaches based on good evidence and analysis. However, the Scans are independent and do not constitute government policy.

The issues covered in the Scans will continue to provide a framework for Horizon Scanning Centre's future work across Government on science and technology developments, and their impact on strategy and policy.

The Scans will also be used by one of our Sciencewise funded projects 'Sciencehorizons', who are holding a number of events in the new year on the wider implications of science and technology. Sciencehorizons will present the public with visions of how new developments in science and technology over the next 15-20 years could affect our future.

More information on the Sciencehorizons events can be found in this newsletter.

For more information on the Horizon Scans log onto: www.sigmascan.org and www.deltascan.org or log onto www.foresight.gov.uk

News Flash!

The NEW sciencewise website has just been launched!
Log onto www.sciencewise.org.uk

Projects in the spotlight...

Sciencehorizons



Sciencehorizons is a national series of conversations about new technologies, the future and society. Sciencehorizons is launching to the public and the media on January 22nd 2007.

Sciencehorizons events will be taking place all over the UK from January to June 2007. At the events people will have the chance to explore some of the ways that our minds and bodies, our homes and communities, our work and leisure time, and people and our planet could be affected by new science and technology in the future. We will be asking people to talk about the future

with each other and tell us their hopes and concerns about the way science and technology could affect our lives.

We have developed a sciencehorizons discussion pack which will help people start a group conversation and give us their views. It contains stories about what life might be like in 2025. These are not predictions, they are just

possible futures, based on currently emerging science and technology. The pack also contains a step-by-step guide and response forms to help summarise the group's discussions and send us their feedback.

For more information go to www.sciencehorizons.org.uk or email us at contact@sciencehorizons.org.uk

Sciencewise projects

sciencehorizons	A programme of public dialogue and engagement about the wider implications of future science and technology	Led by Dialogue by Design
Brain Science, Addiction and Drugs	New engagement project on societal, health, safety and environmental issues surrounding drug addiction.	Contract let by AMS
Nanodialogues	Four experiments in upstream public engagement	Led by DEMOS
Nanotechnology Engagement Group (NEG)	Supporting public bodies in developing a coherent programme of social and ethical research and public dialogue around nanotechnology.	Led by Involve
community x-change	Exploring 'two way street' engagement to give scientists and citizens a voice on science and technology.	Led by the BA
Risky Business	A multi-pronged model to help 14-19 year olds explore risk and technology.	Led by Sheffield Hallam
Science Communication Working Lunches (SCWL)	Sharing experience to build capacity in the sci-comm community.	Led by the BA

Brain Science, Addiction and Drugs



"Will our attitudes to drugs change? Will children be popping "smart pills" before exams? What kind of drug use will society accept?"

A consortium led by the Office of Public Management (OPM) has been chosen to design, manage and deliver a national programme of public engagement activities on current and future issues relating to brain science, addiction and drugs. The programme will explore the hopes and concerns of a broad cross section of the public and the findings will inform the deliberations of an Academy of Medical Sciences Working Group convened, at the invitation of UK Government, to make recommendations on future policy and research needs in this area.

OPM will work with the following organisations and individuals in delivering the work: Dialogue by Design; the British Association for the Advancement of Science; the Dana Centre; the European Dana Alliance for the Brain; the Institute for Public Policy Research; Think-Lab; and the science writer Martin Ince.

Representatives from the consortium will now meet with the Academy Working Group to finalise the design of the programme. The public engagement programme (entitled DrugsFutures), will combine both face-to-face and online activities and will be launched on Wednesday 31st January at an evening event at the Dana Centre. Launch event activities will facilitate dialogue between experts and the public and the project website will go live.

The Academy of Medical Sciences will publish a final report in Autumn 2007 that will include recommendations that have been supported and informed by both scientific evidence and public concerns and aspirations.

For more information on the project please contact **Mr Robert Frost**, Policy Officer, Academy of Medical Sciences
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