

we the curious

Open City Research callout

Photo credit: Lisa Whiting



Are you passionate about giving everyone the opportunity to contribute to science research?

We're on the search for some new Open City Research partners to join our programme of in-venue interactive activities in our Open City Lab space.

That's our dedicated space within our venue here at We The Curious, where our visitors can contribute to active research.

What is Open City Research?

It's about challenging what it means to be a science centre, discovering new things and valuing the knowledge we create together. We believe everyone should have the opportunity to contribute to, and benefit from, scientific research.

As a science centre, we're in a unique place to bring together a range of audiences to take part in active research.

We're looking for collaborators for a range of timeframes, from shorter pop-up special events through to longer 6-month programmes - if you're ready to open up your research to a wider range of people, then this is for you!

[Here's a video from Helen, Head of Open City Research to explain more.](#)

We imagine you'll be:

- Leading an active research project or developing new ideas for research projects – it's important that you can set the direction of your project and research area
- Excited by the ways the public could change the direction, methods, approach or outcomes of your research
- In a position to involve the public directly in your research from early 2026



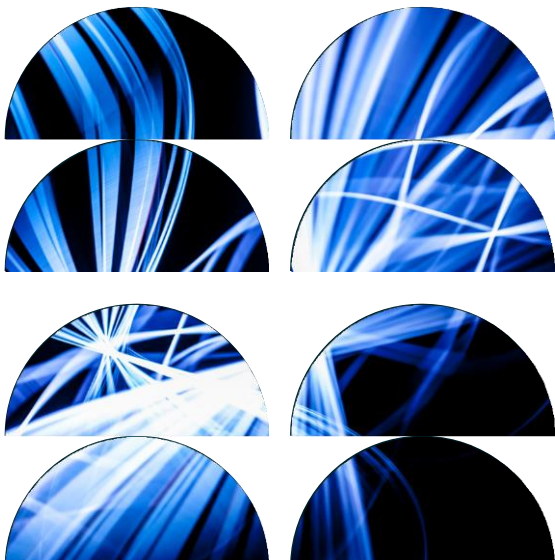
As a partner, we'll ask you to:

- Attend development meetings and check in throughout the development, delivery and evaluation of the activity (This could be 9-12 months start to finish, based on the programme running for 6 months in venue)
- Appear in a short film that will be used in the lab, online and on the We The Curious Big Screen, helping our visitors feel connected to you and your research
- Participate in interviews during and following the activity to explore how the process has changed your way of working
- Commit to recognising and celebrating the contributions and impacts of We The Curious and our visitors to your academic and public engagement activity

Together, we'll commit to:

- Co-developing a programme of activity that creates opportunities for the public to shape your research
- Valuing collaborative and inclusive practice – we expect both sides of this partnership to be challenged through this process
- Celebrating the legacy of the programme and how the public contributions affected the research process
- Actively seeking appropriate funding to ensure the programme will be the best that it can be

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How we'll support you:

- Our dedicated Open City Research team will work with you to balance the needs of your project with audience needs and interest. We specialise in blending public engagement with capturing visitor contributions to research
- We'll share our experience of innovative approaches to public engagement and research data collection, as well as working with ethics approval processes
- We can draw on our network of academic and community research collaborators
- You'll have access to a lab space in the heart of a busy city centre science centre attended by schools, community groups and people from all over Bristol and the surrounding areas. In the 8 months since reopening in July 2024, we've had over 40,000 visitors to Open City Lab.
- A team of skilled science communicators (our Live Science Team), who'll work with the public to bring new perspectives to your research project
- If we commit to a project, we'll ensure a version of it is completed regardless of funding outcomes
- We'll give you a full induction into Open City Research principles, including authority-sharing to give you the best tools for working closely with the public and support throughout the development and delivery to explore the value of their contributions.

Open City Research in action

We've worked with some brilliant partners over the past few years, covering a range of activities including robotics, AI, personal data and more:

[Robot Revolution – two years on](#)

[Can machines understand emotions](#)

[Learning to love seagulls with local school children](#)

[A raw but rich dialogue – really listening to children about toys](#)

[A set of ethical principles that guide our work and shape our practice](#)



Get in touch with us

If any of this has piqued your interest, get in touch with anything from the seed of an idea to something a little more fully fledged – we'd love to hear from you.

We'd be very grateful if you could answer the following questions (don't worry if you don't have all of the answers yet, we can explore these ideas further together – we'd just like to know where you're starting from) in your email to us:

1. How do you see your research benefitting from visitor contributions?
2. What support does your programme have already including any research or public engagement funding?
3. What aspects of your research do you envisage our visitors taking part in?
4. How would working with We The Curious help you develop your public engagement practice?
5. Are there any key priorities from your side – such as aspirations, funding, timings or deliverables?

Drop us a line on opencityresearch@wethecurious.org with a short paragraph about yourself and how you'd like to work with us - a member of the team will be in touch to carry on the conversation.

We're looking forward to hearing from you!