

THE INTERNATIONAL

BNA 2023

FESTIVAL OF NEUROSCIENCE

Sussex Neuroscience Impact Report April 2023



sussex
NEUROSCIENCE

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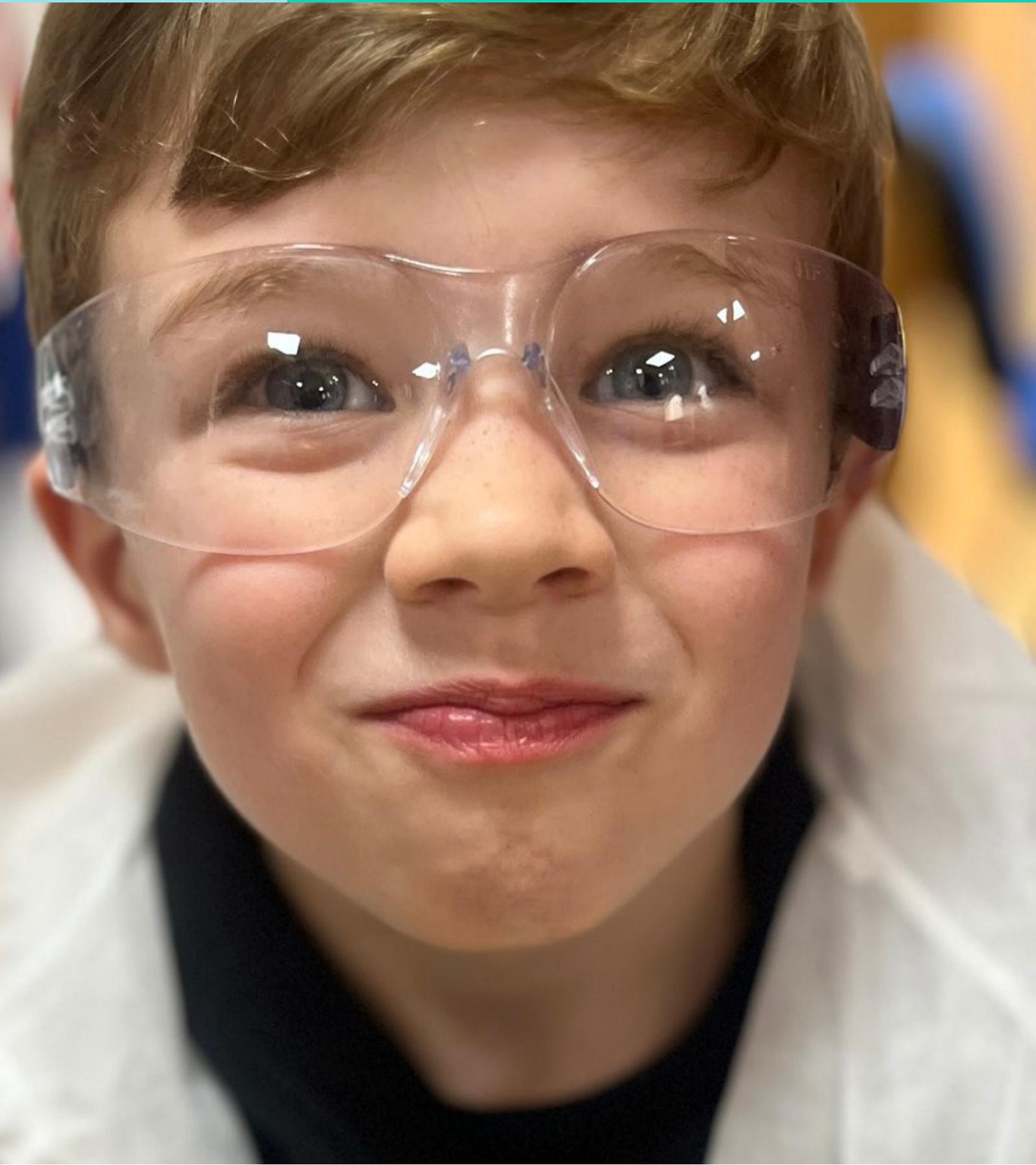
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**36
days**

**of public
engagement in
neuroscience**



Introduction

This year the British Neuroscience Association (BNA) ran their Festival of Neuroscience in Brighton. In partnership with the BNA, Sussex Neuroscience curated and delivered the Bring Your Own Brain (BYOB) Festival – a month of public engagement events aimed at people of all backgrounds and ages.

The wide-ranging programme covered a range of topics, from how babies' vision develops and what babies like to look at, to how human behaviour can help save the planet, to the latest advice on how to keep your brain healthy. There were a variety of activities including live demos, seminars and activities in schools, on the beach and in popular Brighton hotspots.



“We were delighted to that the Bring Your Own Brain Festival was such a huge success. As a team of neuroscientists, we delivered a range of events and activities that engaged members of the public with so much encouraging feedback.”

Dr Sarah King, Sussex Neuroscience.



“It was fantastic to see so many people, from all walks of life, have the opportunity and interest to better understand the human brain. I really enjoyed seeing them explore how that translates to their own lives as well as the bigger issues affecting society today.”

Dr Ruth Staras, Sussex Neuroscience.

Aims

Running from 1 to 30 April in Brighton, the Bring Your Own Brain Festival ran 36 free and accessible neuroscience themed public engagement events and activities.

The events were open to the public and involved people from a diverse range of backgrounds and ages, all with the aim of starting conversations about brain health, engaging people in the workings of the brain and to inspire future interest in the field of neuroscience.

Our objectives were as follows:



To engage a wide range of stakeholders in the wonders of brain science



To increase public awareness of the Sussex Neuroscience research centre



To position Sussex Neuroscience as an accessible and attractive choice for future partnerships and study

Programme Highlights



Building Brains



Brains at the library



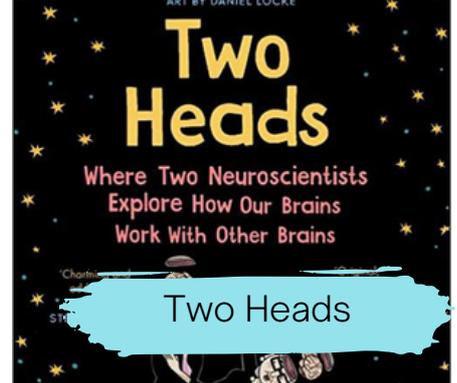
Sussex Brain Bus



Mental Health Expo



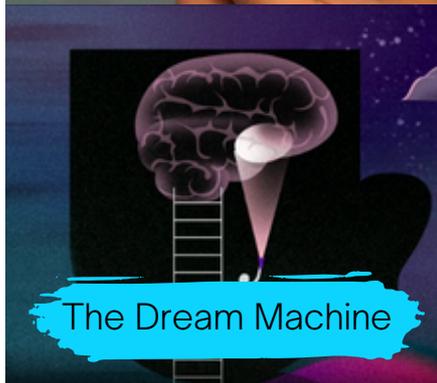
Comic making



Two Heads



Baby Vision



The Dream Machine



Misfolding



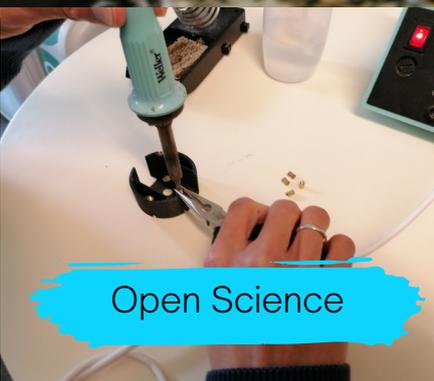
Flow Drawing



Soapbox Science



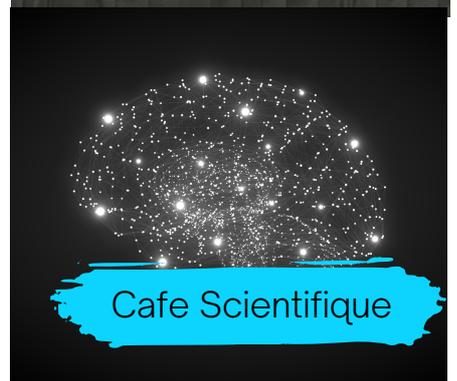
Saving the planet



Open Science



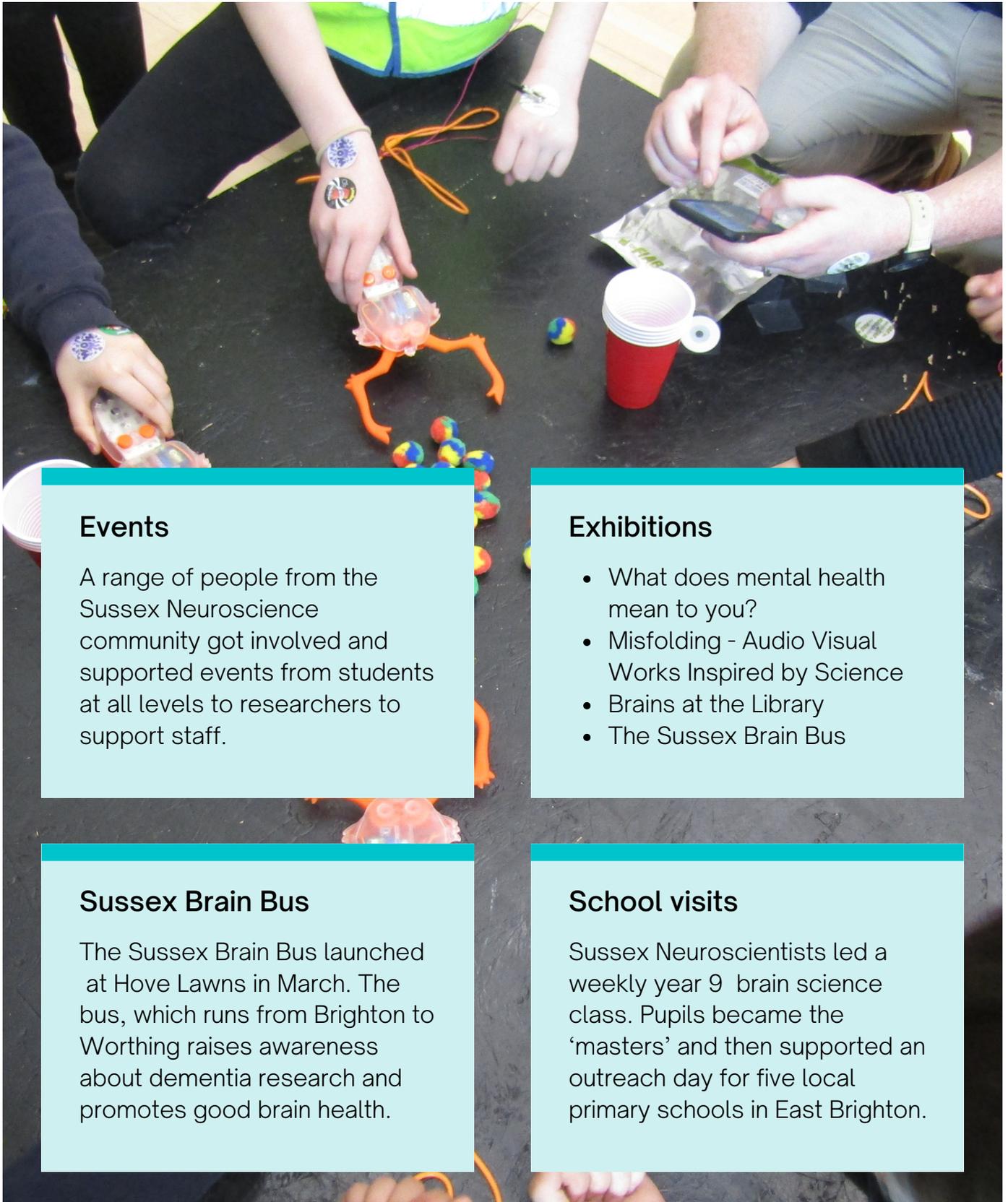
Suicide Lecture



Cafe Scientifique

Programme Features

Sussex Neuroscience worked with a range of partners during the month to deliver a multifarious schedule on a range of topics relating to the brain.



Events

A range of people from the Sussex Neuroscience community got involved and supported events from students at all levels to researchers to support staff.

Exhibitions

- What does mental health mean to you?
- Misfolding - Audio Visual Works Inspired by Science
- Brains at the Library
- The Sussex Brain Bus

Sussex Brain Bus

The Sussex Brain Bus launched at Hove Lawns in March. The bus, which runs from Brighton to Worthing raises awareness about dementia research and promotes good brain health.

School visits

Sussex Neuroscientists led a weekly year 9 brain science class. Pupils became the 'masters' and then supported an outreach day for five local primary schools in East Brighton.

Results

The impact of the Bring Your Own Brain Festival was far-reaching

Below is evidence of success in its aims to raise awareness, to engage a wide audience and to drive future collaborations.



Awareness

5m+

Passers by of Sussex
Neuroscience
initiatives

250k+

People reached on
social media

5k+

Sussex Brain Bus
passengers every week

Engagement

578

People signed up to
events online (with
many more in person)

£35K

Raised to fund BYOB
festival events

200

School children
involved in
neuroscience activities

Collaborations

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Award Winners

Dr Sarah King won the Public Engagement award for the Sussex Brain Bus at the University of Sussex Research with Impact Awards in July 2023.



Feedback

Sussex Neuroscience received excellent engagement throughout the festival. Below are a few insights into the feedback received from the general public.



Sussex Brain Bus

'thank you research team, good work' and 'busses are great!'

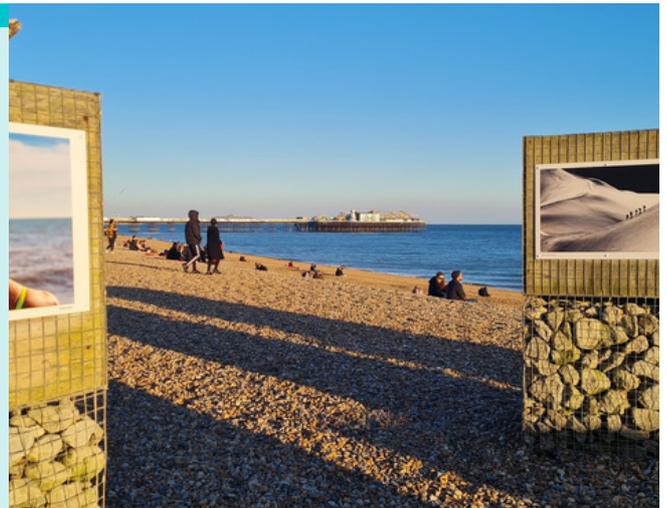
'I promise myself to lose weight despite the menopause'

'I'll try and eat more fruit and veg'

Photo Expo

'Extraordinary reflections - playful and reflective.'

'Studying in London from USA and looking into possible graduate programs abroad- this was super cool and makes me want to look more into the University of Sussex.'



Brain Science Fair

'Easy "entry level" engagement on complex issues.'

'Really great activities. Fascinating information.'

'I really liked the snail race (from a child aged 11-17).'

Learnings / Future Plans

Sussex Neuroscience received excellent engagement throughout the festival. The event provided us with a two way dialogue with the public. We were able to inform a diverse range of people how neuroscience impacts their lives, society and the planet. From the public's questions and feedback, the researchers were able to get a new perception into what areas of research are important to people and why, helping to define our role in society.

Below are recommendations, based on feedback and learnings from this year to develop a public engagement programme for 2024.



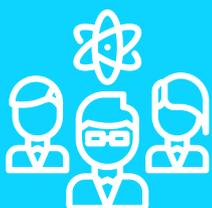
Add the festival to the Sussex Neuroscience annual programme

The aim would be to run the festival over one week as well as taking opportunity of key dates like Brain Awareness Week and linking to the University calendar.



Widen schools programme and engage more pupils

Reach out to additional East Brighton schools, giving access to students who might not usually have the opportunity to get involved in this type of activity.



Offer a central location

The events that took place in central Brighton had a strong turnout. Therefore it is important to ensure that some activities remain central so they are accessible to a diverse range of people.



Digital marketing campaign in Brain Awareness Week

Digital channels played an important role in building awareness and engagement with the range of activities taking place during the Festival reaching over 250k people. If started earlier, the reach could be even wider.



Increase media activity

The wide breadth of topics and relevance to many of the issues facing society today such as disease, mental health, sustainability, innovation and AI offered many media opportunities. The aim would be to better harness these.