

# *FUTURES2021*: European Researchers' Night

## Work Package 1: Awareness Raising Campaign report

### Authors:

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The *FUTURES2021* Awareness Raising campaign managed to successfully meet its objectives and promote this European Researchers' Night as a result of a strong, well-established visual identity and significant expertise and understanding of how to reach our target audiences across the region with clear messages. The campaign utilised a mix of social and traditional media as well as well-placed advertisements and promotional material across the region and reached over 1.77 million people.

## Management of awareness raising campaign

The awareness campaign for *FUTURES2021* European Researchers' Night was coordinated by the University of Bath (UoBa) and delivered by marketing consultant Natalie Hewlett, social media executive Ming Lee and the public engagement and press teams at the University of Bath (UoBa), Bath Spa (BSU), University of Bristol (UoB), University of Exeter (UoE) and University of Plymouth (UoP).

## Target audience

The target audiences for *FUTURES2021* were:

- Independent adults in Bristol, Bath, Exeter and Plymouth with an interest in science. Sub-groups: young adults 16- 24, 25-45, 45+
- Independent adults in Bristol, Bath, Exeter and Plymouth with an interest in art and culture: Sub-groups: young adults 16-24, 25-45, 45+
- Families with children aged 8-18
- School teachers and administrators

## Objectives

The *FUTURES2021* Awareness Raising campaign aimed to:

- raise the profile of *FUTURES2021* and the communicate the key messages to residents across the South West of England
- encourage people from target audiences to attend *FUTURES2021* events at partner venues and online
- raise the profile of Marie Sklodowska Curie Fellows and European Commission research and innovation funding

## Key messages

The messages to be conveyed through the awareness raising WP all had an embedded 'call to action' resulting in meaningful and effective communications and to encourage participation with *FUTURES* activities.

- The South West of England is a hub for outstanding EU research and innovation – find out how it's making your daily life better.

- You can be a researcher – talk with researchers to find out more about what it's like to be a researcher and the routes into research life.
- Being a researcher is a rewarding career – find out more so you can support friends and family as they consider future life goals

## Visual identity

The FUTURES: European Researchers' Night branding, created back in 2018 is now firmly well-established and was used across all *FUTURES2021* activities. Action was symbolised with the 'play' icon, which also suggests looking to the future. This logo was used across all marketing materials and used as place-holders for digital events on platforms such as Zoom.



Figure 1: The FUTURES: European Researchers' Night logo created for all awareness raising materials

## Ensuring compliance with guidelines

The European Commission logo was included on all marketing materials produced for the events. The required text 'This project received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101036029' was displayed on all marketing materials. The additional text '*FUTURES2021* is part of European Researchers' Night, a programme funded by the European Commission with the aim of engaging the public in celebrating the latest and most innovative research at a local and an international level. *FUTURES2021* is one of over 54 events taking place in cities spanning 29 European countries' was also displayed on the *FUTURES2021* website, event sign up forms and post-event videos.

## Communications tools

### Website

For *FUTURES2021*, the FUTURES: European Researchers' Night website became a dynamic digital space, showcasing *FUTURES2021* related content such as events listings, Do Try This At Home activities, blogs, social media content and hosted audio and film content from *FUTURES2021* activities that participants could view at their leisure. The website address is [futuresnight.co.uk](https://futuresnight.co.uk). The website went live at the beginning of the *FUTURES2021* Awareness Raising campaign and over the course of the campaign there were 9,182 page views and 3,114 unique visitors.

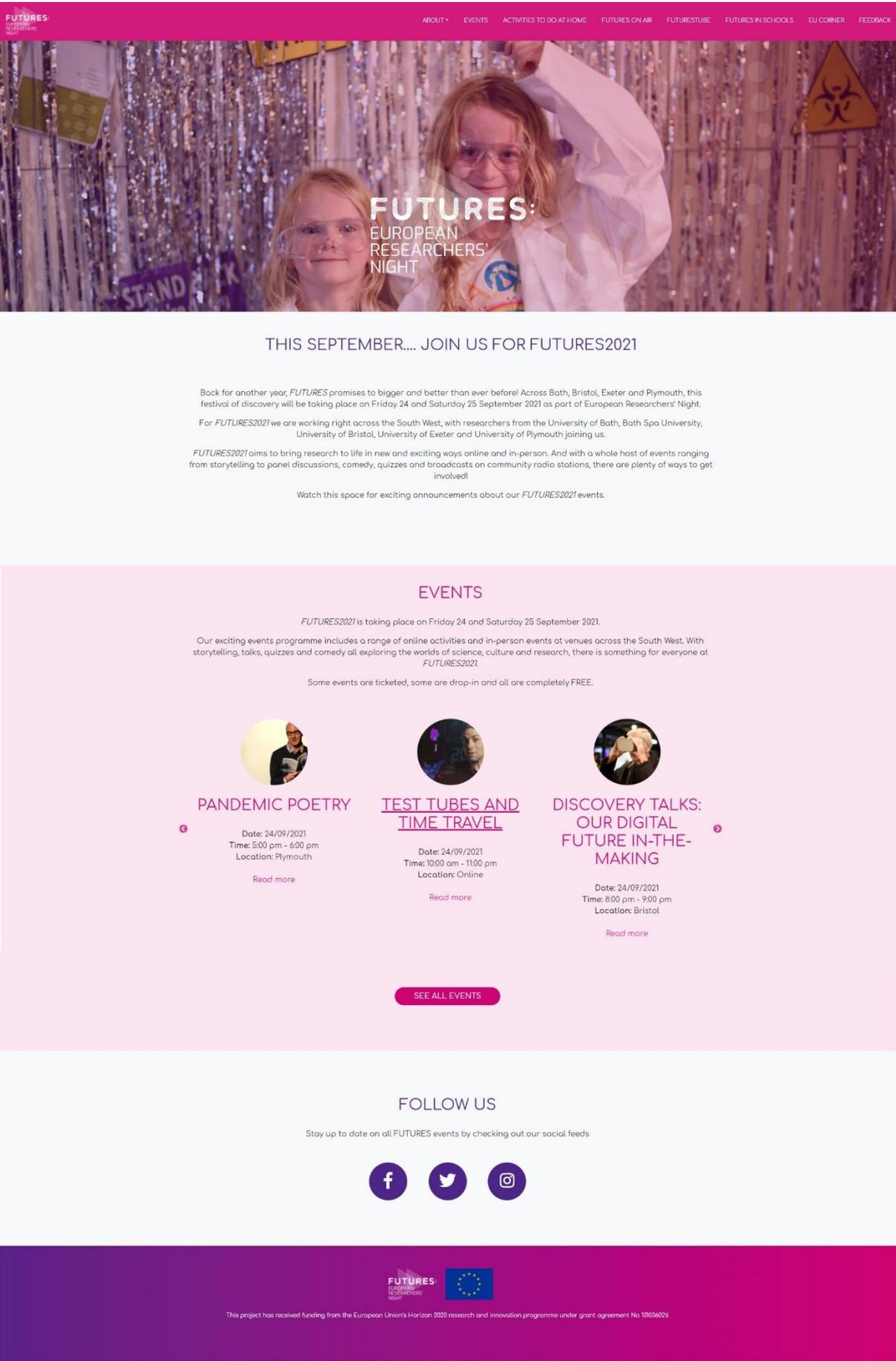


Figure 2: futuresnight.co.uk landing page.

## Marketing and communications materials

### FUTURES Film

The [FUTURES: European Researchers' Night film](#) was commissioned at the end of the previously funded project. This film was used in the awareness campaign before and during the events, and was shared on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The video was viewed 1,136 times on Vimeo and YouTube.

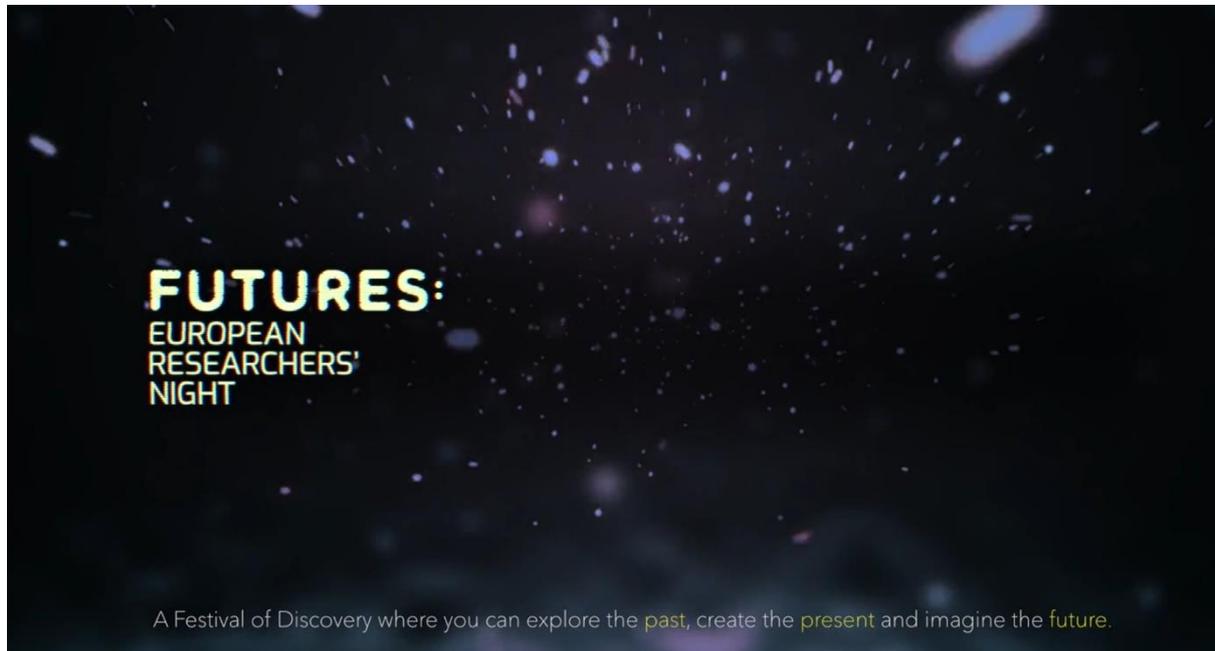


Figure 3: The *FUTURES* film on Vimeo

### Digital assets

We worked with a graphic design team to create several digital assets that were used on social media to promote *FUTURES2021*.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101036029.



Figure 4: Examples of digital assets created for use on social media including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter

## Social media

The social media strategy to raise awareness of *FUTURES2021* builds on the success of the social media campaign for *FUTURES2020* and utilised social media platforms, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Each platform was used to serve a different purpose.

### Twitter

Twitter was used to market events, using the platform to inform audiences about **where** and **what** was happening during *FUTURES2021*. Content that was created provided teasers of events that aimed to drive traffic to the *FUTURES2021* website and event booking site Eventbrite. During the campaign the Twitter account ([@FUTURES\\_ERN](https://twitter.com/FUTURES_ERN)) posted 80 tweets reaching 73,078 users. Over the campaign period the account gained 71 new followers and the posts received 1,950 engagements (likes, retweets, link clicks). Demographic data from Twitter also reveals that 58% of people who engaged with content were female and 73.7% were aged 18-34. The two hashtags #FUTURESNight2021 and #FUTURES2021 were used 975 times during the campaign in the run up to and during the events.

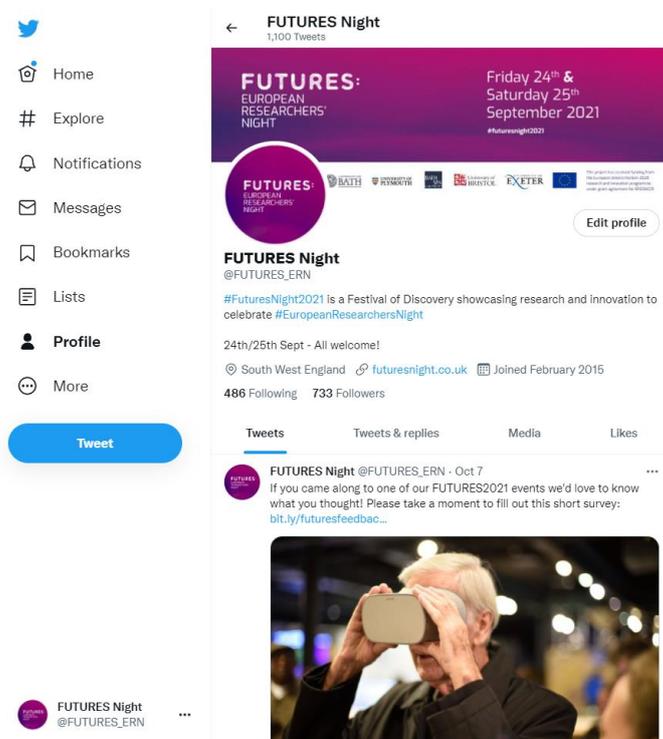


Figure 5: A screenshot of the *FUTURES2021* Twitter page

### Facebook

Through the *FUTURES* Facebook page the Awareness Raising campaign involved a mixed methods approach, posting *FUTURES2021* related content and running a series of paid-for adverts directed at regional and local community interest groups and pages. During the campaign the *FUTURES* page gained 61 likes, 352 fans and the 71 posts reached 197,781 Facebook users and gained 8,859 engagements including Likes, Shares, Comments, media views and link clicks.



Figure 6: A screenshot of the *FUTURES2021* Facebook page

## Instagram

With image focused content, the [FUTURES Instagram](#) account highlighted the people behind the research, sharing researchers' experiences as people in research and using this content to share the key FUTURES messages. Over the campaign 11,787 Instagram users were reached, with the account acquiring 52 followers and the 48 posts gained 109 Likes, Comments and Saves. Demographic data from Instagram also reveals that 54% of people who engaged with content were female, 29% were male and 17% who preferred not to tell us their gender identity. 53.4% were aged 18-34, 33.3% aged 35-44 and 11.4% aged 45-54. The hashtags #FUTURES2021 and #FUTURESNight2021 were used 291 times by participating researchers and event attendees and gained 51,700 Likes, Comments, Video and Stories views.

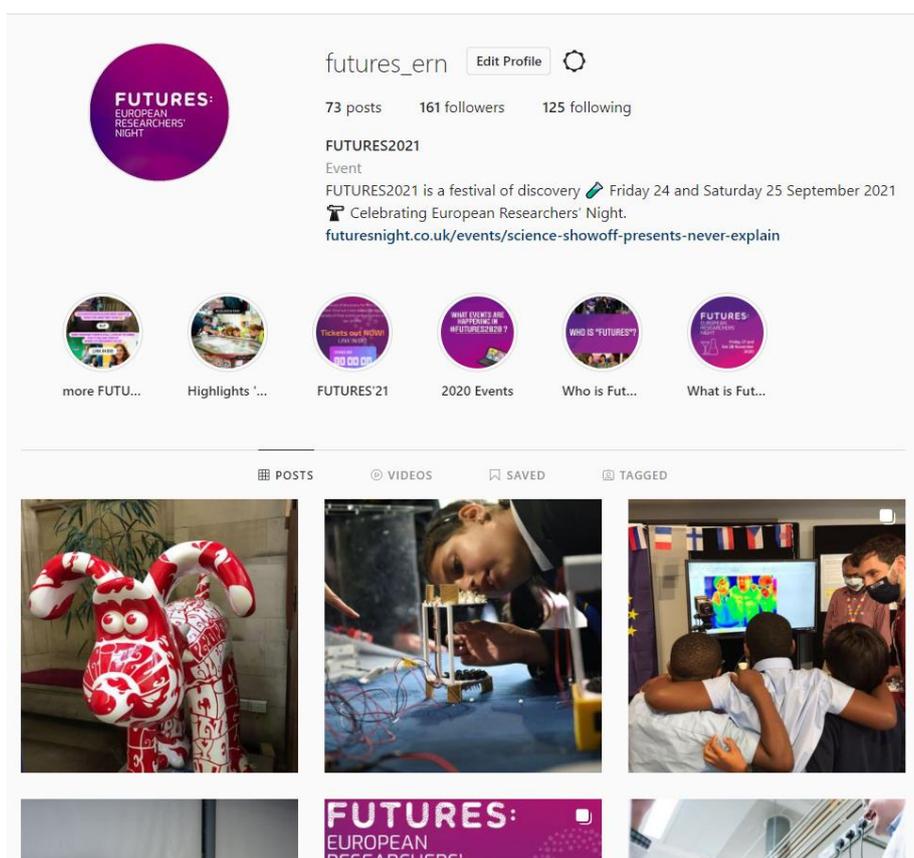


Figure 7: A screenshot of the *FUTURES2021* Instagram page

In total, the social media campaign has an estimated reached of 282,646 users across three social media platforms and 63,154 direct engagements (Likes, Comments, Shares and link clicks)

## Press, broadcast and online media

The Marketing and Communications team worked with regional, local and hyperlocal press to raise awareness of *FUTURES2021*.

Participating researchers took part in broadcast radio interviews on BBC Radio Somerset promoting *FUTURES2021* reaching 10,000 listeners.

Working with destination management organisations and local tourism boards, the Marketing and Communication team created content to be showcased on the websites Best of Exeter, What's on in Plymouth, Visit Bath and Visit Bristol. *FUTURES2021* content hosted on these websites reached an estimated 127,653 visitors.

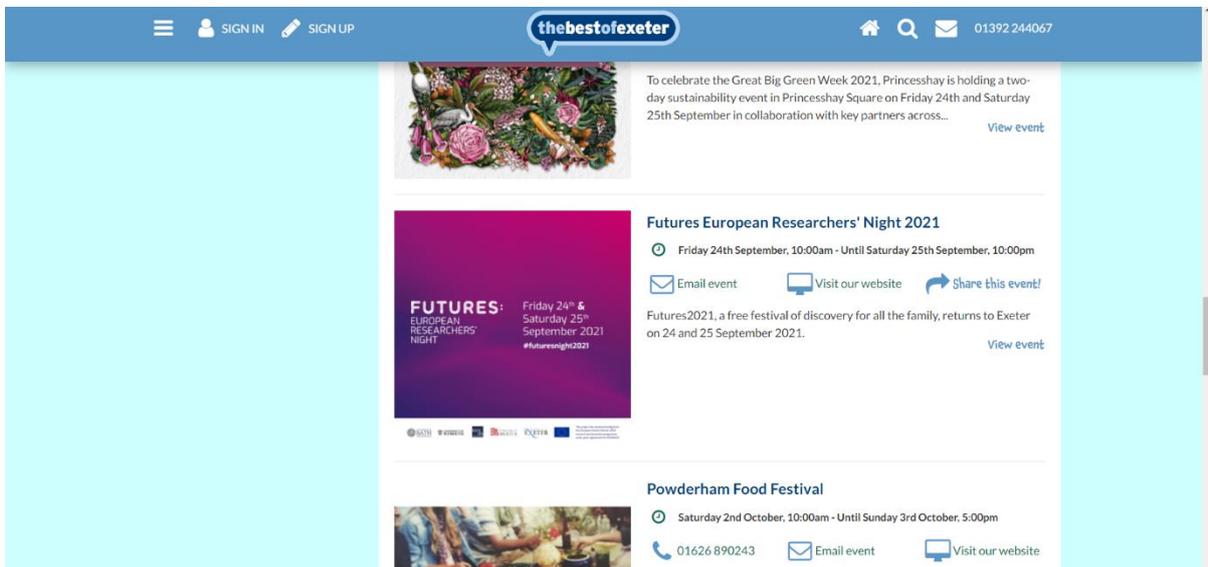


Figure 8: A screenshot of the The Best of Exeter website.

### Promotional paid adverts

Learning from the Awareness Raising campaign for *FUTURES2020*, the *FUTURES2021* campaign incorporated paid advertisements on local news websites and regional commercial radio stations, taking advantage of the increased traffic and listenership<sup>1</sup> to share *FUTURES2021* messages.

Paid adverts were taken out with the South West’s largest regional independent magazine Bristol24/7 and *FUTURES2021* content was created for promotion on their website (494,00 users), newsletter (10,000 subscribers) and social media (150,000 followers).



Figure 9: A screenshot of the *FUTURES2021* feature on the Bristol24/7 website.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2021/oct/28/latest-figures-reveal-how-pandemic-shaped-uk-radio-listening-habits>

Paid adverts were also taken out with other regional print publications including Bath Magazine (25,000 users) and Exeter Living (10,000 users). Several promotional posters and short films were also created for digital screens in locations across Exeter and Plymouth promoting *FUTURES2021* events and key messages for a two-week campaign (estimated 306,000 viewers).



Figure 10: A screenshot of the Exeter Living website Exeter Daily with a *FUTURE2021* advert.

Working with commercial radio organisation Global Radio, the Marketing and Communications team also produced a 30 second lively and dynamic advert that was broadcast 150,000 times on digital Heart Radio across the South West of England online and on smart speakers reaching 200,000 listeners. With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, the Awareness Raising campaign hired a 'billboard' van that toured high footfall locations across the South West in the week running up to *FUTURE2021* that aimed to drive traffic to the *FUTURE2021* website to promote the events happening over European Researchers' Night.



Figure 11: Billboard van outside Bath Abbey with a *FUTURE2021* advert banner.

In total 1,195,000 people engaged with paid advert content as part of the Awareness Raising Campaign.

## Direct mailings

Each of the consortium partners and partner organisations that were part of *FUTURES2021* utilised direct contacts to promote the programme. In total, 150 community and interest groups such as schools, scout groups, local authorities, libraries and community centres were contacted by email and shared content that had a reach of 77,395 people. Activities were also promoted to schools using relevant networks and websites.

## Booking

Several activities had limited capacity so an [Eventbrite](#) booking system was used to guarantee visitors a place at the event. It also served an additional promotional purpose as all events were listed publicly. A total of 3,815 people pre-booked tickets through Eventbrite.

## General marketing materials

### Posters and leaflets

Posters and leaflets were created to market and promote several events. These were used to target specific audiences for events and distributed to venues and locations to reach these audiences. This included awareness-raising activity in Bodmin and Lyme Regis, rural and coastal communities that are not normally exposed to university public engagement activity. In total these posters and leaflets reached an estimated 3,000 people.



Figure 12: *FUTURES2021* A0 poster at the Make Tank venue in Exeter



Figure 13: *FUTURES2021* A5 leaflet for Voyage of Discovery event

Other marketing material was produced that incorporated the FUTURES visual identity and used to promote European Researchers' Night, these included:

- Pop-up banners
- Stickers
- T-Shirts
- Postcards



Figure 14: *FUTURES2021* A5 postcard for Voyage of Discovery event



Figure 15: University of Plymouth team in *FUTURES2021* t-shirts at Voyage of Discovery event



Figure 16: Pop-up banner used during a University of Bristol Discovery Talk

## Summary of reach of awareness raising campaign

All elements of WP1: Awareness Raising, when compiled, achieved a total maximum reach of 1,776,095. This is broken down as follows:

Social media engagement (Followers, Likes, Shares, Comments, media viewed and link clicks and Retweets): 63,154

Social media reach of *FUTURES2021* content: 282,646

Website traffic: 12,296

Media coverage: 10,000

Eventbrite booking reach: 3,815

FUTURES Film Vimeo views: 1,136

Online listings: 127,653

Posters and leaflets: 3,000

Community and interest email newsletters: 77,395

Paid advertisements: 1,195,000