

How youth organisations engage with the STEM Ambassadors programme



Background: STEM Ambassador Chris Botting – supporting the Scouts

I have worked in the aerospace and defence industry since 2015. I am passionate about STEM and I love my job. I'd like to encourage children to follow the same career path as I've taken so that they too can have a rewarding job and make a real difference to society.

I firmly believe that the younger generation will solve the real issues that we are facing today, whether that's climate change, sustainability, recycling, energy production – all of the issues that they are inheriting – so we need as many engineers and scientists as we can get!

My current employer is very supportive of my work as a STEM Ambassador: they encourage us to leave our day jobs and go and deliver STEM activities to children in schools, and they give us a day of paid leave every year to do this.



What I do as a STEM Ambassador

I love to champion engineering and science with young people, so it made total sense to run STEM activities for our Scout group. The Scouts have a few badges relating to science and engineering so there was a clear fit.



Chris Botting

I want to show that engineering is for everyone, not just

for boys. Thanks to the support of my employer and their passion for outreach with schools, I can borrow all the kits and resources that they have put together when I run sessions for the Scouts. We do all sorts of things with them: 3D printing, activities with electrical kits, welding with chocolate, building chariots – you name it!

When I do STEM activities for the Scouts, there's less of an emphasis on formal teaching and certainly no assessment as there might be in a school. We focus more on skills development, whether that's leadership, teamwork, navigation or even knife skills – **we find a way to give them opportunities to try things that they otherwise wouldn't have the chance to try.**

In my spare time, however, I've also been involved in running Beavers, Cubs and Scout groups, and now I try and bring the two things together – organising STEM-based activities for our young people.

The impact of being a STEM Ambassador

I often ask the children that I work with, right at the start of a session, "Who wants to be a scientist or an engineer when they grow up?" and I might get a few people saying yes. Children often don't really know what a scientist or an engineer actually does at work. So, I tell them a bit more about my job, and we run some exciting, practical, hands-on activities and then I ask them the same thing at the end. I always have lots more children putting their hands up!

I find that children remember the sorts of activities that we do together for a long time. My son, for example, got to take part in a STEM Ambassador activity making a parachute at a big STEM event back in 2019 and he still remembers it to this day!

It's important that children have fun and that they enjoy themselves – that's what starts to unlock the idea of thinking about how they might go into science and engineering as a future career path.

About STEM Ambassadors

STEM Ambassadors is a fantastic volunteer programme that has been running for over 20 years.

Our volunteers offer their time, passion and energy to visit schools, colleges and youth group organisations to deliver requests from teachers and youth group leaders who want to link STEM subjects to the real world of work.

Find out more at our [information session](#).



Request an Ambassador

STEM Ambassadors can bring STEM subjects alive in your youth organisation and provide real-life examples of industry careers. The STEM Ambassador website allows you to request support from our amazing national network of STEM Ambassadors.

This allows you to bring different people, with different backgrounds and skills, into your youth or community group, providing an amazing range of role models for the young people you work with.

Find out more at our [information session](#).



How to get involved

If you have been inspired to bring STEM alive in your youth organisation's activities and you'd like to request a STEM Ambassador, please visit stem.org.uk/stem-ambassadors/request-stem-ambassador

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