Ollscoil Chathair
Bhaile Átha Cliath
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London International Youth Science Forum 2026

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The theme of the 67th LIYSF was ‘Truth through Science’; this is very apt in today’s world, as so much misinformation and propaganda is being pushed. It’s important to be able to break through that noise and stick to what is true.

The forum was opened by someone from each of the 90 countries selected bearing their flag. I was chosen to bear our nation’s tricolour and doing this really illustrated to me the multinational nature of the forum and science as a whole and more specifically, how science was the common denominator for everyone there - the love, passion and pursuit of truth is what brought these people together. During your career in STEM, you will meet people from around the world, so the forum is a great way to get used to that fact and embrace it! Learning the cultures and customs of my friends was such a highlight and great fun.

In that opening ceremony, Nobel laureate John O’Keeffe spoke about his research. Attending his lecture really stoked my curiosity about the human mind and the ways it works, something I would have never even considered before. That is what the forum is all about, in essence - expanding your horizons into different aspects of science, as they all mix together at the end of the day. For example, I learned some really interesting Biology (extra cellular vesicles) and as a student with a chemistry background, it made me think about the pharmaceutical side and how we can harness that bit of biology for our own medicines!

During my 2 weeks in London we were subject to fantastic lectures and visits. What made them great wasn't necessarily the content of them, which is obviously world class, but the diversity of them. The main takeaway I had was how interconnected science is and how having a narrow view, like me who was laser-focused on chemistry and seldom anything else, is simply not the reality of either a future in academia or industry and you need to have an open mind to learning everything!

The Forum will expose you to so many different people from so many different and fascinating backgrounds. I made friends from around the corner in Blanchardstown to all the way to Australia and everywhere in between. The connections and friendships I made during my time were by far my highlight; the people I met will be friends until the day I die, as the bond you make over there is strangely unique to any other. If you're scared about going due to the social aspect, don't be. Everyone is in the same boat and you will make fantastic and deep, meaningful connections, I promise.

On that note, I wish you the best of luck if you apply and have a great time!