KAREN MASTERS
Communicator, Explorer and Trainer

❝ I get to play with amazing telescopes and look at galaxies perhaps no-one has ever looked at before ❞

Karen Masters, Reader in Astronomy and Astrophysics, Institute of Cosmology and Gravitation at the University of Portsmouth

What kind of person is Karen?

Karen is a very curious and creative person, which is no surprise when you realise she does research for a living! She's equally very helpful and conscientious, which is perfect for someone who teaches at university and also reaches out into local communities and engages young people and adults alike.

What is Karen's job?

Karen is a Reader in Astronomy and Astrophysics for the Institute of Cosmology and Gravitation at the University of Portsmouth. In a nutshell, Karen is all about researching and teaching Astronomy! Her job consists of leading research explorations into how galaxies form and evolve in our Universe, as well as teaching Physics to undergraduate students. Karen also leads efforts to engage the public and schools, which she does by delivering outreach programmes.

How did she get that job?

From about the age of 14 or 15, Karen wanted to be an astronomer and learn about the Universe. She did a Physics degree at university and then an MSc and PhD in Astronomy in the USA! Her first job as a researcher was at Harvard in the USA and she was paid $50,000, which is a great salary to start on. During her career, Karen has taken two maternity leaves, which she really enjoyed.

Why is Karen the 'Communicator', 'Explorer' and 'Trainer'?

Karen blends the 'Communicator', 'Explorer' and 'Trainer' types really well because her job as an academic is all about understanding Science and then communicating that knowledge to a variety of students and young people by teaching them and running outreach programmes. Karen likes the 'People Like Me' quiz because it points out all the different jobs that are needed in Science—there's definitely more than just one way to be a Scientist!