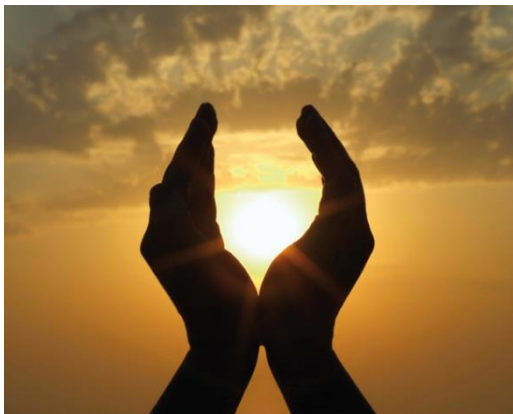


Research Councils UK

Public Engagement with Research

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Research Councils UK (RCUK):



Our focus is on **excellence with impact**

Public Engagement with Research: “The myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of research can be shared with the public”.

Engagement is a **two-way process**, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating **mutual benefit**.

RCUK strategic aims:

The **RCUK PER strategy**:

- To encourage the research community to engage with the public
- To help public views to inform policies and research strategies
- To help secure a supply of future researchers and ensure they can act as informed citizens.

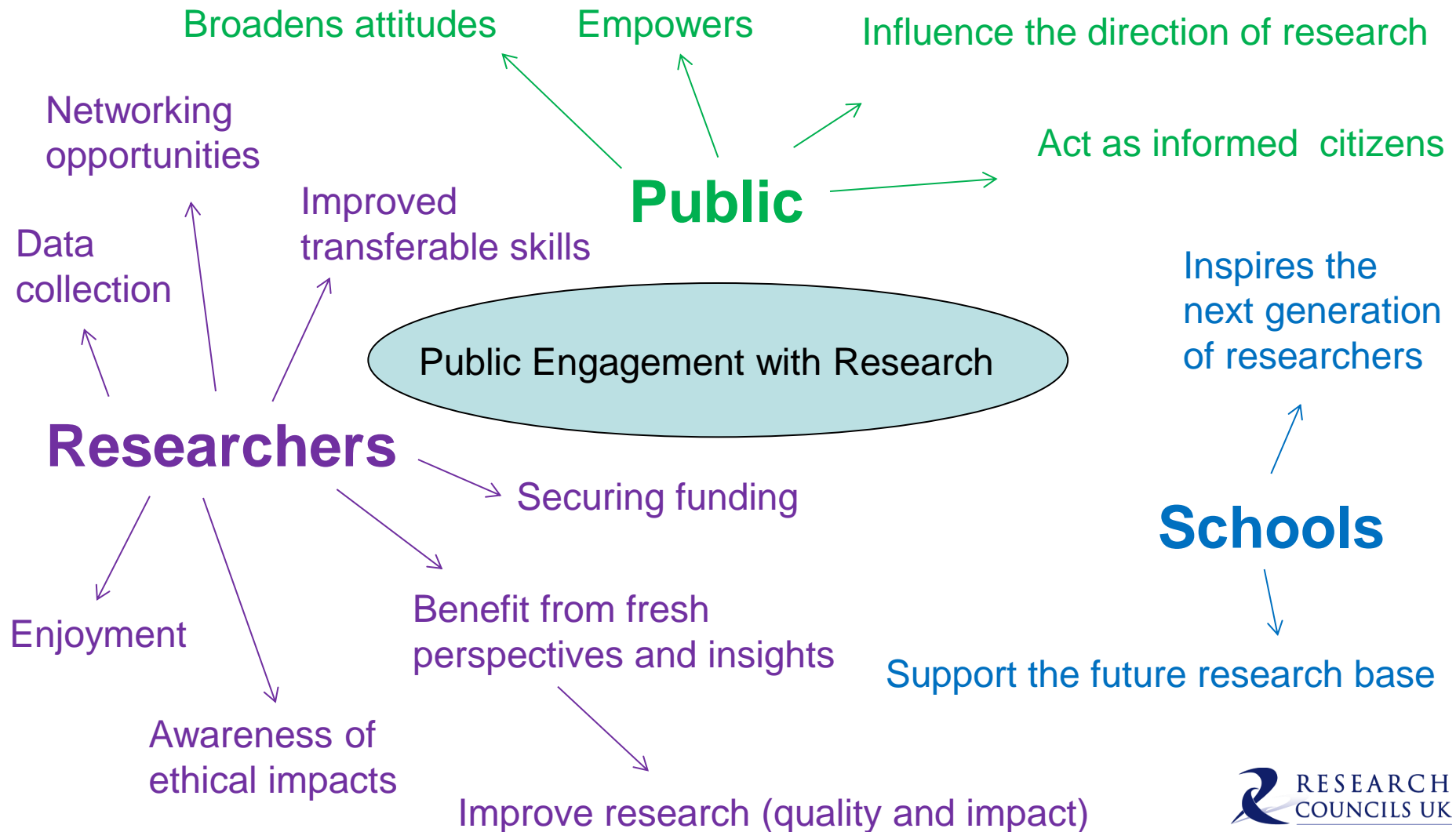
We believe that engaging the public with research helps empower people, broadens attitudes and ensures that the work of universities and research institutes is relevant to society and wider social concerns. We also believe that research can be enhanced through dialogue and coproduction.

We are seeking to embed public engagement throughout the research life cycle and Higher Education sector



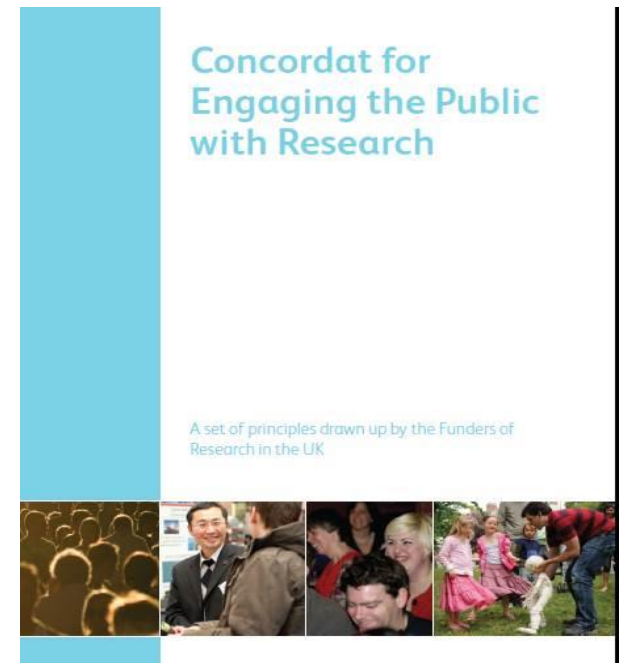
Public Engagement is included within the **Council's Royal Charters** and in the **Mission and Statement of expectations on Economic and Social Impact**.

What are the benefits of PER?



Working Collaboratively: Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research

In 2010, UK funders of research joined together as signatories of the **Concordat for Public Engagement with Research** to ensure that public engagement is valued, recognised and supported across the research and higher education sectors.



Embracing structural and cultural change: Embedding and signposting PER across the sector

RCUK aim: Stimulating a reflexive and responsive research community that engages the public within the research process

- The **Beacons** for Public Engagement (2008–2011): 6 university-based centres
 - Building capacity for PE through support, recognition and reward.
- The **Catalysts Initiative** (2012-2015);
 - Embed PER within policies, procedures and practices
- **Catalysts Seed Fund** (2015/16, 2016-17); 10 “seed” Catalysts (inc. the University of Oxford)
- The **National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE)**
 - Managing and co-ordinating initiatives
 - PE training and resources
 - Annual Engage conference

Capacity Building: School programmes, public dialogue and support for researchers

RCUK aim: “To secure and sustain a supply of future researchers and enable the next generation to act as informed and involved citizens”

- The **School-University Partnerships Initiative** (2013-2016): 12 HEIs
 - Schools programmes; Teacher CPD (Myscience), online teaching resources (Schoolscience.co.uk), student research placements (Nuffield Research Placements).

RCUK aim: “Enabling public views to inform policies and research strategies across Research Councils and the broader community”

- **Public Dialogue**
 - Ensures transparency and enables public views to shape policy and future research

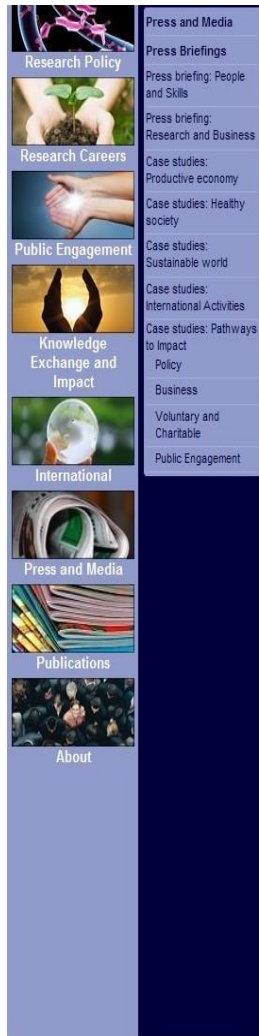
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- **Supporting researchers and skills development**
 - The PE component of the **Vitae Research Development Framework**

Supporting Researchers: Public Engagement in *Pathways to Impact*

- Research funding proposals to the Councils now include a statement on the potential economic and social impact that research will make, via a ***Pathway to Impact*** statement
- Public engagement activities are regarded as pathways to impact
- Researchers can also request resources to fund these PE activities
- PE activities can happen throughout the course of a research grant
- Allows researchers to explore potential benefits of PER from the outset
- This will help embed public engagement with both researchers and their host institutions

Supporting researchers? Public Engagement in Pathways to Impact



Case Studies: Pathways to Impact

Press and Media

Press Briefings

Press briefing: People and Skills

Press briefing: Research and Business

Case studies: Productive economy

Case studies: Healthy society

Case studies: Sustainable world

Case studies: International Activities

Case studies: Pathways to Impact

Policy

Business

Voluntary and Charitable

Public Engagement

Research Councils UK (RCUK) continue to work with our research communities to develop our guidance for Pathways to Impact. We encourage researchers to be actively involved in thinking about how they will achieve excellence with impact and to explore pathways for realising the impact of their research.

The case studies provide personal accounts from RCUK funded researchers in regards to their approaches and experiences of Pathways to Impact. The case studies also provide guidance, top tips and best practice for helping researchers to realise the impact of their research.

A common top tip included in the case studies is avoiding potential pitfalls, such as focusing only on past activities instead of making sure the Pathway to Impact is forward looking and explores the potential impact of the current project. This should include milestones where appropriate (perhaps illustrating this with a GANNT time-line) and explaining the rationale behind activities. For example, if including an event, highlight who it's aimed at and why you have chosen that specific pathway towards impact.

Further information and guidance, including FAQ's and top tips, for Pathways to Impact is available [here](#).



Policy: Case studies which highlight researchers' interactions with government



Business: Case studies which highlight researchers fostering partnerships with business and industry



Voluntary and Charitable: Case studies where researchers have worked with partners in the third sector



Public Engagement: Case studies which include engaging the public with research

- All grant applicants are required to submit a PTol document- maximum two sides to include Knowledge Exchange and Public Engagement
- Guidance is in the grants handbook and the FAQ section of the RCUK website

Public Engagement Support

Pathways to Impact, across all Councils...also

AHRC: Connected communities. Pathways to Impact. Follow on funding

ESRC: Festival of Social Science, resources, guidance and tools

EPSRC: Follow on funding. Impact Acceleration Accounts

MRC: Public Engagement in Science Activities - Seed Fund

To encourage and support engagement with the public and other stakeholders, funds are available to enable MRC-funded scientists to pilot new activities and develop innovative engagements.

NERC: Some PE funding for specific Initiatives- new strategy launch

STFC: Provides a range of funding support for PE including small, local or 'pilot' projects and large award grants of up to £100,000 for Public Engagement projects.

A lived example: Local knowledge improves flood study

Professor Sarah Whatmore has good reason to value highly local knowledge on the kind of flood risks that have recently led to disastrous consequences in parts of the UK. For her, the benefit from the public has been a direct contribution to delivering improved research results for new flood risk models tailored to local water catchment areas. Her innovative approach to public engagement enabled those affected by flooding to collaborate in the whole research process sustained over a year. It involved natural and social scientists in the research team working closely with volunteers from communities in Yorkshire and Sussex.

Professor
Sarah Whatmore
of The University of Oxford



It has brought a lot of interest from academic, policy and civic quarters in the UK and beyond which has extended my range of contacts and led to new collaborative opportunities

Future direction of PER: UKRI

- Continued commitment to supporting PER, through transition period and beyond
- Synthesising recent and emerging evidence to inform future policies and provisions
- Anticipate further work to embed public engagement within the research lifecycle and institutional structures, policies and procedures



Thank you for listening

- **The RCUK Public Engagement with Research Strategy:**
<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/publications/RCUKPERStrategy.pdf>
- **Factors Affecting Public Engagement by researchers survey:**
• <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/pe/persurvey/> and
www.wellcome.ac.uk/PERSurvey
- **The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement:**
<http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/>
- **Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research:**
<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/Publications/policy/perConcordat/>
- **Catalyst Seed Fund:** <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/scisoc/RCUKcatalystseedfundguidance.pdf>
- **Teacher CPD:** <https://www.sciencelearningcentres.org.uk/>

