Interim Review of the Public Engagement with Research Catalysts Programme 2012 to 2015

A report for Research Councils UK
March 2016

FULL REPORT

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Summary

1. The Public Engagement with Research (PER) Catalysts programme

This report provides an interim review of the Public Engagement with Research (PER) Catalysts programme. The PER Catalysts programme was funded by Research Councils UK (RCUK) from 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2015. Its purpose was to support eight Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to embed public engagement with research within their policies, procedures and practices.

“Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit.” (National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement)

 Grants of up to £300,000 over three years were awarded to the following HEIs:

- University of Aberdeen
- University of Bath
- University of Exeter
- Institute of Education
- University of Nottingham
- Open University
- Queen Mary University London
- University of Sheffield.

Each university also provided matched funding, or in kind support to an equivalent value, to support their planned project. The eight individual Catalyst projects developed in different ways, each with their own specific aims and objectives. Some established public engagement teams or dedicated units, to take the Catalyst work forwards, both during and beyond the funded project. Others set up Catalyst project teams for the duration of the funding, embedding the work in other parts of the institution when the project ended. Several HEIs described a ‘distributed network’ approach, where academic and/or professional services staff were involved as PER co-ordinators or advocates, alongside the Catalyst or public engagement team.

All projects were required to consider and respond to the overall aims of the PER Catalysts programme, summarised as follows:

1 http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/explore-it/what-public-engagement
• To create a culture within the grant holding HEIs where excellent PER is formalised and embedded, through:
  o strategic commitment to public engagement
  o integration of public engagement into core research activities
  o reward and recognition of researchers involved in PER
  o encouraging and supporting staff to become involved
  o creating networks within institutions to support, share and celebrate good practice
  o contributing to a wider network supportive of public engagement.
• To build on experience to develop best practice that recognises the two-way nature of public engagement with research.

2. About this interim review

The purpose of this interim review was to synthesise evidence about how the funded activities of individual Catalyst projects had contributed to the aims of the programme as a whole. Work on the review took place in November and December 2015 and involved desk-based, documentary analysis of the Catalyst projects’ annual, final and evaluation reports. The review’s objectives included:

• To consider the extent to which the Catalyst projects had met the overall aims of the programme.
• To assess what had changed (in terms of processes and outcomes) for the Catalyst HEIs as a result of RCUK investment and the extent to which these changes were embedded and sustainable (impact of the programme on culture change).

3. To what extent have the Catalyst projects met the overall aims of the programme?

The review found that the funded activities of the eight Catalyst projects had met the overall aims of the programme in the following ways:

• The projects had all found a number of significant ways to signal their strategic commitment to PER, both externally and internally.
• The Catalysts provided evidence in their reports about how they had integrated public engagement into many of the core research activities undertaken by their host HEIs.
• All eight Catalyst projects gave examples of the ways in which their input had helped bring about changes to the reward and recognition of researchers.
• All of the eight Catalyst projects had found numerous ways to encourage and support staff to do public engagement work.
Most had created internal networks to share good practice, support staff and celebrate public engagement.

Through their reports, the Catalyst projects provided evidence about how they had contributed to a wider network supportive of public engagement by sharing learning and disseminating best practice in PER.

All eight of the Catalyst projects provided at least one example of how they had helped to develop and support best practice that recognised the two-way nature of public engagement with research (i.e. activities which involve interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit).

Table 1 on pages 7-10 provides more detail about the processes and outcomes achieved through the aims of the PER Catalysts programme as a whole.

4. What had changed for the eight HEIs as a result of their involvement in the PER Catalysts programme?

Strategic changes

Involvement in the Catalysts programme helped HEIs make a commitment to PER at institutional level, thereby giving public engagement a ‘strategic stamp of approval’. Many of the Catalysts had made significant strategic changes which included:

- Embedding a commitment to PER in corporate plans.
- Developing new, shared understandings of PER at institutional level and defining and articulating these definitions in university-wide strategic documents.
- Developing new institutional PER strategies, or including PER in other strategies and planning documents.
- Making adjustments to formal governance arrangements to ensure institutional oversight of PER activities.
- The introduction of PER champions who helped to raise the profile of public engagement, formalise a visible commitment to PER, and for some HEIs, increase the effectiveness of support available to researchers.
- Establishing on-going strategic, financial commitment to sustaining central PER support (and some PER activities) after the end of the funded Catalysts programme.

Operational changes

Involvement in the Catalysts programme had enabled HEIs to develop new operational structures, systems and resources for PER, including:

- New structures which provided co-ordination and visibility for previously disparate PER activity - for some HEIs this involved setting up new, central PER
units or teams; others used dispersed networks and/or senior level champions to facilitate the delivery of support for PER.

- Changes to elements of core research support - these included changes to ethical review, financial and administrative systems for supporting PER, job descriptions, performance and annual review processes, promotion criteria, workload allocation; and changes to leadership development and professional development programmes to include PER.

- Evidence of the outcomes of changes to core research support, including four PER-led promotions to Professor during the timescale of the Catalysts programme.

- Increased practical support and new resources for PER – tailored support and guidance on embedding engagement activities into research funding applications; new PER awards schemes; increased learning opportunities and training; more access to PER platforms and opportunities.

- New initiatives to trial and embed methods for measuring the quality and impact of PER activities - this was an area where HEIs were keen to develop their understanding in order to better inform PER practice and planning in the future.

**Attitudinal changes**

The evidence for attitudinal changes was less easy to identify, but key outcomes noted by Catalysts’ final and evaluation reports included:

- More recognition of the value and expertise of the Catalyst team or unit.
- Increased motivation and enthusiasm for PER amongst staff.
- The recognition by staff that public engagement adds value to a university’s core business and helps to deliver high quality research and teaching.
- More cross-university understanding of the role, importance and value of public engagement with research, particularly in terms of being a legitimate and valued component of research roles within HEIs.
- Increased recognition of the value of PER as a potential platform for career enhancement, through additional funding streams and new forms of career recognition.
- One Catalyst’s evaluation also provided evidence, through baseline and post-project interviews with eight public partners, of changes in public attitudes towards universities, and improved understanding of the work and activities of the host HEI.

**Conceptual changes**

This review considered the ways in which the eight Catalyst projects had helped broaden, define and articulate new understandings of public engagement with research within their
host HEIs, so bringing about conceptual changes at strategic and operational levels. There was no clear evidence from the Catalysts’ reports of the extent to which these conceptual changes were fully embedded into the thinking and practice of individual HEI staff. However, all eight of the Catalyst projects cited examples of staff practice that recognised the two-way nature of public engagement with research, from setting the agenda and defining research questions through to publication and dissemination of research findings.

Other evidence for conceptual changes included:

- Increased breadth and variety of PER undertaken by staff in the Catalyst HEIs.
- Wider understanding that including PER in grant applications makes bids stronger – several HEIs made the case that many of their successful proposals had received input and advice from Catalyst teams, particularly with preparing ‘pathways to impact’ statements and plans for embedding PER throughout the proposed research project.
- Inclusion of PER as part of the research discourse at most Catalyst HEIs – public engagement in research was now embedded within the day-to-day vocabulary of academic staff seeking support for their funding applications, academic activity and personal development.

5. To what extent were these changes embedded and sustainable?

Self-assessment data from the Catalysts themselves\(^2\) provided clear evidence that many of these changes were now embedded and had already made a significant impact on the culture of their host HEIs. The Catalysts’ self-evaluation data also confirmed their awareness that further focus is needed on measuring the quality and impact of PER activities on public groups and communities.

All eight HEIs gave some details of how they planned to sustain the impact of their work. Most Catalysts were planning to retain many of the strategic and operational changes made during the lifetime of their projects. But it was not possible to identify their plans for maintaining attitudinal and conceptual changes from the material available at this stage. The nature of evidence in relation to these types of changes necessitates collection via carefully designed research and evaluation with staff, students and the public. Most HEIs were still at an early stage of development of such methodologies and had yet to establish the nature of key changes in stakeholders’ attitudes and understanding in relation to PER. This is to be expected, given that the primary remit of the three-year Catalysts programme

\(^2\) The Catalysts used the EDGE tool, a self-assessment tool designed by the National Centre for Coordinating Public Engagement (NCCPE) to map progress against nine key dimensions of institutional support for public engagement: mission, leadership, communication, support, learning, recognition, staff, students and public. Catalysts self-assessed their position on the EDGE tool in terms of a number of statements relating to each of the nine dimensions which summarised the extent to which their felt their PER practice was ‘embryonic’, ‘developing’, ‘gripping’ or ‘embedded’. For more information, see: http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/self-assess-with-edge-tool
was firmly focussed on establishing institutional processes and structures for supporting and embedding PER.

6. Conclusions

From the evidence available, it is clear that when taken as a whole, the funded activities of the eight Public Engagement with Research Catalysts projects have fully met the aims of the programme overall. Involvement in the Catalysts programme has led to numerous and significant changes for the host HEIs. Many of these changes have now been embedded at strategic and operational levels and will be sustained in the longer term, thus showing clear evidence of culture change within the eight universities involved in the programme.

Suggestions for future review and post-programme evaluation include:

1. Further collection of consistent and comparable data on the processes, outputs and outcomes of each of the Catalyst projects.

2. Further evaluation of the extent to which culture change has been embedded and sustained within the host HEIs beyond the end of the Catalysts programme funding.

3. An investigation of the impact of the Catalysts programme on the wider sector.
Table 1  Summary of processes and outcomes of the Public Engagement with Research (PER) Catalysts programme against its aims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme aims</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To create a strategic commitment to public engagement with research</td>
<td>Embedded a commitment to PER in corporate plans</td>
<td>• Four HEIs had achieved the inclusion of PER in their host HEIs’ corporate plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developed and established a shared understanding of PER</td>
<td>• Four had developed and defined a shared understanding of PER, the wording of which was now embedded in university-wide strategic documents</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• For the other four HEIs, there was evidence that they had focussed on developing a shared understanding, but less explicit reference in their reports to development and agreement of a specific definition of PER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developed institutional PER strategies, or included PER in other strategies and planning documents</td>
<td>• Two HEIs had developed an institutional PER strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Seven HEIs provided evidence of the inclusion of PER in other strategies and planning documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Created senior leadership and engagement champions to oversee and promote PER</td>
<td>• Four HEIs made changes to their formal governance arrangements to ensure institutional oversight of PER activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• All eight recognised the importance of high level champions who could create institutional respect and recognition for engagement activities and represent a PER ‘voice’ on strategic working groups</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Many of the Catalyst projects had also created formal and informal PER champions to support and embed a culture of engaged research at an academic level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Made a financial commitment to PER</td>
<td>• Six HEIs provided details of their financial commitment to PER through institutional funding of a range of PER support and activities during the lifetime of their Catalyst projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Seven HEIs confirmed that on-going financial commitment was in place to sustain central PER support post-Catalyst, from April 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To integrate public engagement into the core research activities of HEIs</td>
<td>Provided practical support for core research activities which emphasised the importance of PER</td>
<td>• Support with developing funding applications including ‘pathways to impact’ statements (seven HEIs), resulting in PER-related support to at least 800 academic staff and input to at least 300 grant applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Evidencing PER activities - e.g. support with preparing impact statements for the REF, submission of PER activities within the RCUK Research Outcomes System or ResearchFish (four HEIs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Input and guidance on including/embedding engagement activities into different parts of the research process (all eight HEIs)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Programme aims
- Measured the quality and impact of PER activities
- To reward and recognise researchers involved in public engagement

### Processes
- Changes to ethical and administrative processes to facilitate PER (two HEIs)
- All eight Catalysts had undertaken some form of research or evaluation work to collect evidence about the progress and impact of their projects
- Five Catalysts teams had conducted their own research, whilst in two cases, other university staff from outside the Catalyst team were recruited to undertake evaluation tasks
- One HEI had commissioned an independent evaluation from an external research organisation which ran alongside the Catalyst and reported at interim and final stages
- Five Catalysts had employed some element of a pre- and post-programme design, comparing baseline data collected at the start of their programme with follow-up data collected in 2015 using the same research tools
- Of these, three HEIs took a primarily formative approach, using mixed methods to explore and inform their Catalyst work
- Two had chosen to focus their efforts primarily on summative evaluation against aims and objectives, using qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups
- Several HEIs were planning to continue exploring methods for measuring the quality and impact of PER activities post-Catalyst

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Made changes to job descriptions, performance reviews and promotion criteria</th>
<th>All eight of the Catalyst projects had found ways to flag up the importance of incorporating public engagement into job descriptions, performance reviews and promotion criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provided evidence of PER-led promotions</td>
<td>Two HEIs provided evidence of four PER-led promotions to Professor during the timescale of their Catalyst projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made changes to workload management to include PER support and activities</td>
<td>Six HEIs made specific mention of changes to workload frameworks or role recognition, which took into account PER activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Established PER award schemes</td>
<td>Seven of the eight Catalyst projects had either established their own award schemes for recognising excellence in PER, or had ‘piggy-backed’ on an existing award scheme, for example by adding a new category related to public engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme aims</td>
<td>Processes</td>
</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
| To encourage and support researchers and staff at all levels to become involved | Supported funding applications and plans for research projects            | • Seven projects offered tailored, one-to-one support with grant applications (including ‘pathways to impact’ statements).  
• Four provided other forms of application support via group workshops, master classes, case studies and good practice guidance materials or toolkits.  
• One university had developed a Public Research Interest Group which provided ‘lay’ expertise in reviewing research proposals from around 50 public members.  
• Four HEIs also helped researchers to provide systematic evidence of their engagement activities, for example through impact statements for the REF, submissions to the RCUK Research Outcomes System or ResearchFish, and other forms of formal feedback on the outcomes and impact of PER.  
• All of the Catalyst projects had found ways to offer input and guidance on PER throughout the research life cycle, from agenda setting, to designing methodologies and forms of dissemination that enabled the participation of different people, communities and groups |
| Provided training and opportunities for professional development                  | Provided training and opportunities for professional development          | • Mentoring and one-to-one training/professional development (all eight HEIs)  
• PER-specific training and professional development programmes (four HEIs)  
• Integrating PER training to other professional development programmes (six HEIs)  
• Input on PER to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes (six HEIs)  
• Workshops and other one-off learning opportunities (four HEIs)  
• At least 5,300 individuals (researchers, students, and professionals support staff) have taken part in informal and formal learning as a result of the Catalysts programme |
| Set up seed funding or grants schemes                                           | Set up seed funding or grants schemes                                      | • Seven of the eight Catalyst projects had established seed funding or grants schemes to support, explore and develop aspects of PER, resulting in at least 174 additional public engagement projects being funded and supported as a result of the Catalysts programme |
| Provided and sign-posted PER platforms and opportunities                        | Provided and sign-posted PER platforms and opportunities                 | • Highlighting existing opportunities and platforms for PER, such as local initiatives or national festivals  
• Proactively working with the organisers to ensure their HEI’s involvement in these national or regional initiatives  
• Creating new platforms and opportunities for public engagement activities. |
<p>| Developed PER resources                                                         | Developed PER resources                                                   | • All of the eight Catalyst projects developed resources for raising awareness of PER and sharing good practice |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme aims</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| To create networks within institutions to share good practice, celebrate their work and ensure that those involved in public engagement feel supported | Created internal networks to share good practice, support staff and celebrate public engagement | • Two HEIs set up online or email based PER networks  
• Six established networks that meet regularly for discussion and to host events or training  
• Two helped to create PER networks aimed at students |
| To contribute to a wider network supportive of public engagement including the NCCPE, other recipient HEIs and the wider HE community | Contributed to wider networks supportive of public engagement | • All eight of the Catalyst projects had shared advice and learning with other HEIs, through personal visits, teaching engagements, invitations to speak at other HEIs’ seminars or conferences, or partnership working  
• Six of the eight HEIs provided information about the events their Catalyst staff had been involved with as speakers or presenters  
• Three of the Catalyst project teams had been involved in contributing to external consultations relating to aspects of public engagement in research, including for example the development of guidance for the recently launched RCUK Catalyst Seed Fund  
• All eight of the Catalyst projects had found ways to share learning about PER more widely across the sector and outside of HEIs |
| To build on experience from the Beacons and other HEIs (including grant holders) to develop best practice that recognises the two-way nature of public engagement with research | Helped to develop and support examples of embedded PER in practice | • All eight of the Catalyst projects had supported PER activities that reflected researchers’ understanding of the benefits of engaged research as a mutually beneficial dialogue with the potential to be embedded at different stages of the research process |
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1. Introduction and context

1.1. Public engagement: the UK context

The Public Engagement with Research Catalysts programme was funded by Research Councils UK (RCUK) from 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2015. Alongside the School-University Partnerships Initiative\(^3\), and the Beacons for Public Engagement initiative\(^4\), the Catalysts programme is one of several recent initiatives to support and enhance public engagement activities within universities and research institutes.

“Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit.” (National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement\(^5\))

The Beacons initiative (2008-2011) funded six university-based collaborative centres and one co-ordinating centre to explore and address how higher education institutions (HEIs) could create a culture that encourages staff to engage with the public. The co-ordinating centre was a collaborative project between the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England and was formally established as the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) in 2008.

The NCCPE worked closely with the six Beacon centres throughout the initiative and has received support from the Beacon funders\(^6\) since 2011 to continue to help universities engage with the public. The NCCPE has produced a wealth of web-based resources\(^7\), provides bespoke training and consultancy, and runs regular workshops, a national conference and a public engagement network. Key outputs have included a Manifesto\(^8\), whereby HEIs are invited to signal their commitment to public engagement, and the EDGE tool\(^9\), a means for universities to self-assess their current support for public engagement.

Learning from the Beacons initiative also contributed to the development of the Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research\(^10\), which was drawn up in 2010 by RCUK and other funders of research in the UK. The Concordat sets out a shared vision about the expectations of research organisations, managers, supporters of researchers and researchers for embedding public engagement within the higher education sector. Its four key principles are:

1. UK research organisations have a strategic commitment to public engagement.
2. Researchers are recognised and valued for their involvement with public engagement activities.

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\(^1\) [http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/pe/PartnershipsInitiative/]
\(^2\) [http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/work-with-us/completed-projects/beacons]
\(^3\) [http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/explore-it/what-public-engagement]
\(^4\) The Beacons initiative was funded by RCUK, with the Welcome Trust and the UK Funding Councils.
\(^5\) [http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/resources]
\(^6\) [http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/manifesto-public-engagement]
\(^7\) [http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/self-assess-with-edge-tool]
\(^8\) [http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/pe/Concordat/]

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3. Researchers are enabled to participate in public engagement activities through appropriate training, support and opportunities.

4. The signatories and supporters of this Concordat will undertake regular reviews of their and the wider research sector’s progress in fostering public engagement across the UK.

The inclusion of public engagement within Research Councils’ ‘pathways to impact’\(^{11}\) and HEFCE’s Research Excellence Framework also provided an impetus for HEIs to value, recognise and support PER. It was within this context that RCUK recognised that continuing support – through the Catalysts programme and the School-University Partnerships Initiative - was needed to maintain momentum and further embed public engagement within the higher education sector.

1.2. The Public Engagement with Research (PER) Catalysts programme

The institutional-level funding offered by RCUK’s PER Catalysts programme was intended to complement the support already available via the project and grant based approach of individual Research Councils.

RCUK awarded grants of up to £300,000 over three years (2012-2015) to the following Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to support them to embed public engagement with research within their policies, procedures and practices:

- University of Aberdeen
- University of Bath
- University of Exeter
- Institute of Education
- University of Nottingham
- Open University
- Queen Mary University London
- University of Sheffield.

Each HEI also provided matched funding, or in kind support to an equivalent value, to support their planned work. Under the programme, the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement\(^ {12}\) was funded to provide support and coordination for the participating HEIs. This role included ensuring Catalyst projects learnt from each other and that learning was shared with the wider sector.

The eight individual Catalyst projects developed their own specific aims and objectives for embedding a culture of public engagement within their host HEI. Projects were also required

\(^{11}\) http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/innovation/impacts/
\(^{12}\) http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/
to consider and respond to the aims of the Catalysts programme as whole, which reflected key learning from the Beacons initiative about how to approach culture change:

1. Create a culture within the grant holding HEIs where excellent public engagement with research is embedded, through:
   - Strategic commitment to public engagement
   - Integration of public engagement into the core research activities of HEIs, including measuring quality and impact of public engagement with research activities
   - Reward and recognition of researchers involved in public engagement
   - Encouraging and supporting researchers and staff at all levels to become involved (e.g. by building capacity for public engagement amongst researchers)
   - Creating networks within institutions to share good practice, celebrate their work and ensure that those involved in public engagement feel supported
   - Contributing to a wider network supportive of public engagement including the NCCPE, other recipient HEIs and the wider HE community.

2. Build on experience from the Beacons and other HEIs (including grant holders) to develop best practice that recognises the two-way nature of public engagement with research.

1.3. Mapping progress and impact of the Catalysts programme

To help RCUK map the activities, outcomes and impact of the Catalysts programme, HEIs were asked to submit annual reports, and an end-of-award final report to convey the story of their Catalyst projects, its achievements, learning and any evaluation results.

All eight of the HEIs had also conducted or commissioned some form of evaluation, research or feedback in relation to their individual Catalyst projects. For some of these, separate reports, summary reports, blog posts or published papers are available.

RCUK issued guidance about the structure and content required for the final reports. In particular, HEIs were encouraged to reflect on how far they had come from their starting point, with reference to their position on the NCCPE’s EDGE tool\(^\text{13}\) (see Annex A). In their final reports, each project was also expected to set out evidence of key achievements against the call aims and to use the programme’s impact framework (see Annex B) to help with this. In addition, RCUK asked NCCPE to compile an anonymised report to share learning from the Catalyst projects about embedding culture change and public engagement with research\(^\text{14}\).

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\(^\text{13}\) The EDGE self-assessment tool was designed by the NCCPE to map progress against nine key dimensions of institutional support for public engagement: mission, leadership, communication, support, learning, recognition, staff, students and public. Progress is mapped in terms of a number of statements relating to each of the nine dimensions which summarise the extent to which an organisation’s PER practice is embryonic, developing, gripping or embedded.

The purpose of the NCCPE report was to enable projects to honestly reflect on some of the challenges and tensions they had experienced, without undermining the success that those projects had achieved.

RCUK’s approach to mapping progress and impact reflected an awareness of the challenges inherent in changing the culture of large and complex organisations. In funding the Catalysts programme, RCUK recognised that the central purpose was to establish institutional processes and structures for supporting and embedding PER in practice and that many key outcomes and impacts were likely to be achieved beyond the lifetime of the funded projects.

1.4. Purpose of this interim review

The purpose of the interim review reported here was to synthesise evidence about how the funded activities of individual Catalyst projects contributed to the aims of the programme as a whole. RCUK’s work brief for the review outlined the following key objectives:

- Consider to what extent the Catalysts have met the overall aims of the programme.
- Assess what has changed for the Catalyst HEIs as a result of RCUK investment and the extent to which these changes are embedded and sustainable.
- Examine any impacts or benefits for HEIs as a result of being part of a RCUK-branded programme.
- Synthesise key outputs, outcomes and impacts across the whole initiative.
- Where possible (and data exists to evidence this), synthesise learning from the project in terms of the different models and approaches.

1.5. Approach and caveats

Work on the interim review took place during November and December 2015. The following data sources were made available by RCUK:

- Funding applications submitted by each of the eight HEIs involved in the Catalysts programme.
- Annual reports from each Catalyst project for years one, two and three.
- Final reports from each of the eight Catalyst projects.
- Separate evaluation reports relating to five of the Catalysts.
- Final report from the NCCPE.
- Other relevant programme documentation supplied by the funders.

Documents were read and analysed thematically, with reference to the review’s aims and objectives. In order to understand the contribution made by the Catalysts programme, the analysis of project documentation was guided by the following questions:

- Aims: What changes did the programme hope to achieve? Why are these important?
Processes and outputs: What activities (processes and outputs) did HEIs undertake to achieve the aims/changes? How have these been implemented within their own institutional context?

Outcomes: What difference did the Catalysts programme make to the HEIs and those involved? What immediate and post-programme changes (outcomes) were achieved through the Catalysts’ activities (processes and outputs)?

Impact: What are the longer-term, deeper changes of the programme, if any at this stage? Have any of the programme’s outcomes been embedded and sustained (impact)? Have there been any other intended or unintended impacts of the programme for HEIs and the wider public engagement community?

The review was a small-scale, desk-based piece of work and only provides a commentary on the evidence available at the time of analysis. Data relating to the activities, outcomes and impact of the Catalysts were gleaned entirely from the written documents and reports submitted by the project teams to RCUK by October 2015. We are grateful to the Catalyst teams, and to NCCPE, for permission to read and cite from their project documentation.

Since the purpose of the review was to synthesise the evidence from these documents, the report does not cover every detail of the funded work, or all aspects of the activities undertaken by the Catalysts. More information about the activities of each of the projects can be found in the Catalysts’ final reports. Although analysis for this review also involved a consideration of the successes and challenges encountered by Catalyst projects in implementing their PER work and the lessons learned, reporting of these areas is covered by the NCCPE’s own report (for citation see footnote 12), so not included here. Further information about the on-going public engagement work of individual HEIs can be found on their websites (see Annex D).

1.6. Summary

The Public Engagement with Research (PER) Catalysts programme was funded by Research Councils UK (RCUK) from 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2015. It awarded grants to eight Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to support them to embed public engagement with research within their policies, procedures and practices.

This report provides an interim review of the PER Catalysts programme, through a synthesis of evidence about how the funded activities of individual Catalyst projects have contributed to the aims of the programme as a whole. Work on the review took place in November and December 2015 and focused solely on the desk-based analysis of documents submitted by the Catalyst projects to RCUK by October 2015.

15 http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/pe/catalysts/reports/
2. The eight Catalyst projects: different universities, different approaches

The Catalyst projects were hosted by eight universities of varying size, and with different structures for delivering HE-based research and teaching. The approach adopted by each Catalyst, during the lifetime of the funding award, reflected these wider institutional contexts. Consequently, the eight projects developed different ways of embedding public engagement with research within their host HEI. Some used the programme funding to establish public engagement teams or dedicated units, to take the Catalyst work forwards, both during and beyond the funded project. Others set up Catalyst project teams for the duration of the funding, embedding the work in other parts of the institution when the project ended. Several HEIs described a ‘distributed network’ approach, where academic and/or professional services staff were involved as PER co-ordinators or advocates, alongside the Catalyst or public engagement team.

This Chapter provides a snapshot overview of how each of the eight Catalyst projects had used the funding to set up new structures and processes for supporting a culture of public engagement with research. It also includes a summary of the extent to which these approaches were sustained post-Catalyst. Further detail about the specific activities, outcomes and impact of public engagement by Catalyst-funded HEIs is provided in subsequent sections of the report.

2.1. University of Aberdeen: Public Engagement with Research Unit and academic-led coordinators for public engagement

The University of Aberdeen used the Catalyst award to help establish a new, central unit: the Public Engagement with Research Unit (PERU). Based in the Directorate of External Relations, the PERU employed two full-time Public Engagement Officers, a part-time Development Coordinator, and was managed by the University’s Head of Public Engagement with Research along with the Catalyst project co-lead from the Researcher Development Unit. Three part-time, academic co-ordinators for public engagement (based in each of the three academic colleges) were also seconded to the Catalyst project to help improve links with the academic community and to raise awareness of the PER agenda. Additional senior academic leadership came from the project’s principal investigator (PI), the university’s Vice Principal.

During the lifetime of the award, the Catalyst team developed a website and monthly newsletter, offered workshops and training events, provided bespoke support with integrating public engagement into grants and research projects and created a number of other initiatives to support PER activity, including an Enabling Fund, the Principal’s Prize for PER, a new University of Aberdeen May Festival, and a Research Interest Group for members of the public to help shape university research. Researcher development and training was a major focus for the Aberdeen Catalyst project, with public engagement embedded in staff/student inductions and professional skills development and a particular emphasis on coupling this training with specific public engagement events and opportunities.
The existing structure of the PERU and its key activities have been sustained beyond the end of the Catalyst project through a mixture of core funds and a cost recovery model.

2.2. University of Bath: Public Engagement Unit and a network of advocates

The University of Bath’s approach involved establishing a dispersed programme of work alongside a central Public Engagement Unit to deliver its Catalyst project. Sited within the marketing and communications team, the Public Engagement Unit employed two, full-time, core staff - a Head of Public Engagement and a Public Engagement Officer. Support and advocacy came from the project’s principal investigator (PI), the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research, and the work was overseen by a steering group and a project working group.

Known as Engaged360@Bath, the Catalyst project aimed to facilitate highly visible public engagement, embedded across the whole research lifecycle. This approach was underpinned by the project team’s commitment to reflective practice and evidence-based learning, described in their final report as follows:

“It is a constant series of interactions, reflections, adaptation and interactions – to change a culture is a mantra of ‘try, reflect, adapt and try again’.”

The project itself was structured through four work packages: establishing structures; embedding and facilitating public engagement; targeted initiatives; and evaluation. A network of formal advocates was initiated by the project, to help deliver the work package relating to targeted initiatives, which including ‘building postgraduate skills’, ‘promoting citizen science’ and ‘inspiring tomorrow’s researchers’. Other key activities during the lifetime of the project included: showcases to celebrate high quality public engagement with research; developing networks of engaged researchers; instigating new university level awards for public engagement with research; developing local opportunities for engagement; providing seed funding awards for small scale/pilot projects; delivering a programme of professional development for researchers; making changes to human resources documentation; supporting the development of centre and departmental engagement strategies; and supporting the inclusion of engagement within grant applications.

Post-Catalyst, the university has agreed to maintain the structure and location of the Public Engagement Unit, initially for a further three years to July 2018.

2.3. University of Exeter: Catalyst project team and PER champions

The University of Exeter established a Catalyst team to deliver the funded project. The team comprised a full-time project manager (based in the central Research and Knowledge Transfer team) and a part-time academic lead, based within the College for Social Sciences and International Studies.

Exeter’s approach involved offering PER support via a distributed network, rather than through a centralised unit. Fourteen champions for PER were appointed, with a small amount of their time bought out to dedicate to their activities. Together with 26 seed fund recipients, the PER champions acted as connectors and advocates for the Catalyst project through their own engagement activities and internal advocacy. The project team delivered a range of
support for public engagement activities, including supporting seed funded projects, one-to-one advice and mentoring, training events and networking opportunities.

Since the end of the Catalysts programme, resources have been secured through HEFCE’s Higher Education Innovation Funding\(^\text{16}\), and from the university, to support the roles and activities of the project manager, academic lead and champions for at least another year. For the longer term, a case for further on-going funding has been signed off by the university’s Research and Knowledge Transfer Management Group.

### 2.4. Institute of Education (IOE): Catalyst project team

The Institute of Education (now UCL Institute of Education) established a Catalyst team which was based within one of the university’s academic research units. Overseen by the Research and Impact Support Group and the Pro-Director: Research and Development, the Catalyst team was initially designed to include a project lead (part-time, professorial level role) and five part-time research officers. Due to staff changes, the number of research officers actively engaged with the Catalyst fluctuated. In year three, three members of the Research and Consultancy Services team were seconded part-time to support the project with its plans to embed PER within the broader professional services structure.

The aim of UCL IOE’s Catalyst project was to move forwards from having 'micro-cultures' of strong public engagement to where a culture of public engagement with research was embedded across the institution as a whole. The merger with UCL, during the lifetime of the project, necessitated some adjustments to the original work plans, but core principles were retained and included the following activities: advice and support with grants and projects, mentoring and one-to-one training opportunities, development of case studies and other resources, and an annual prize for public engagement.

In terms of sustainability post-funding, the Catalyst team identified other groups within the university to take forward some aspects of the PER work they had started.

### 2.5. University of Nottingham: Catalyst project team

The University of Nottingham set up a Catalyst team to run the funded project, which included the recruitment of two full-time staff – a project manager and project administrator. The Catalyst project was hosted by the Community Partnerships team, which already undertook support for the university’s public engagement work. The aim of the Catalyst project was to extend the reach of this remit to include public engagement with research, and to seek to engage with hard-to-reach local communities.

The project was overseen by a strategic advisory board, an external mentor/adviser with Beacon experience and a project steering group. There were direct reporting lines from the project to the University’s Executive Board and the Vice-Chancellor through the PI (Pro-Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, Access and Community) and also through the Head of

\(^{16}\) [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/kess/heif/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/kess/heif/)
Research Outcomes. During the lifetime of the Catalyst award, key activities included: designing a PER training programme, providing networking opportunities, setting up the Vice Chancellors’ Award for excellent public engagement activity, establishing seed funding for PER projects through a Partnership Fund, and highlighting existing and new platforms for researchers to engage with the public. In terms of sustainability, many of the outcomes and learning points from the Catalyst work have been embedded into structures supporting knowledge exchange activities and funding for impact (such as through Impact Acceleration Accounts\textsuperscript{17}).

2.6. The Open University: Catalyst project team

The Open University (OU) established a multi-disciplinary Catalyst project team of 11 active researchers, led by a Project Manager and the university’s existing Champion for public engagement with research. The Champion for PER already had a senior leadership role within the university and for the lifetime of the award also took on the role of operational lead on the Catalyst project. The project was overseen by an advisory group and had input and advocacy from its PI, the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Scholarship and Quality.

The OU’s Catalyst team took a distributed approach to delivering activities to embed PER, which was informed by the results of initial and on-going action research with staff. The team aimed to work with researchers at all levels to create the conditions where engaged research could flourish. As they explained in their final report:

“In effect, we have sought to develop a scholarship of engagement, a community of reflective practice where engagement can flourish... The embedding agenda demands a more distributed approach, much of which is outside the direct control of the PER Catalyst, including: external clarity on the descriptions of engaged research and routine assessments of quality (e.g. in assessing grant proposals); agreement to change promotion criteria; and approval to develop a Business Case for upgrading OU blogging.”

Key activities undertaken during the period of the Catalyst award included bespoke advice and support for researchers, setting up an OU-wide blog and Engaged Research seminar series, training and professional development, Engaging Research award scheme, a short-term seed funding scheme, structured opportunities for publics to engage with OU research and legacy training resources.

Post-Catalyst, the OU’s Research, Scholarship and Quality Unit has taken responsibility for mainstreaming engaged research as a core part of the research culture. Practical support to researchers is now embedded within the Research and Enterprise Office and central funding for dedicated activities is embedded in existing funds, e.g. through the OU’s HEIF budgets and its central research fund.

\textsuperscript{17} http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/funding-opportunities/impact-acceleration-accounts/
2.7. Queen Mary University London: Centre for Public Engagement

Queen Mary University London (QMUL) set up its Centre for Public Engagement (CPE) in March 2012, following the Catalyst award. The CPE was based within the Office of the Principal and Professional Services and employed five part-time staff: a Director, the CPE Manager, a Public Engagement Officer, an Assistant Public Engagement Officer and a Community Engagement Officer.

Through the Catalyst award, the CPE offered a central, focal point for public engagement, which aimed to bring together and extend the university’s existing PER activities. Key work during the funded project included, tailored one-to-one support with grants and projects, training and professional development, a range of networking opportunities, a regular CPE bulletin, a public engagement award scheme, and monthly and annual funding rounds for small and large projects. At the end of the Catalysts programme, QMUL made a commitment to retain the CPE structure and its full staff team through support from core funds.

2.8. University of Sheffield: Public Engagement and Impact team and a network of public engagement champions

The University of Sheffield used the Catalyst award to help set up a new Public Engagement and Impact (PEI) team, in order to deliver the aims and objectives of the Catalyst project. Based in Research and Innovation Services, the PEI team included a full-time Head of Public Engagement, a full-time Office Administrator, a part-time Research and Evaluation Manager and three full-time Public Engagement Manager/Officer posts, each responsible for a one or more academic Faculties.

During the Catalyst project, the PEI team focussed on providing targeted support to integrate and co-ordinate the existing widespread, but largely uncoordinated, PER activity across the University. Working with a newly established network of public engagement champions, the PEI team offered PER support to researchers, through bespoke advice and mentoring, through a Masterclass training programmes, and by increasing the number of platforms and opportunities for engagement with different audiences. A range of web-based toolkits, videos and other resources were also developed. Post-Catalyst, the University of Sheffield has agreed to fund the existing staff and on-going work of the PEI team until the end of March 2018.

2.9. Summary

The eight Catalyst-funded HEIs developed different approaches to embedding a culture of public engagement with research within their host institutions. Some established public engagement teams or dedicated units, to take the Catalyst work forwards, both during and beyond the funded project. Others set up Catalyst project teams for the duration of the funding, embedding the work in other parts of the institution when the project ended. Several HEIs described a distributed network approach, where academic and/or professional services staff were involved as PER co-ordinators or advocates, alongside the Catalyst or public engagement team.
3. Strategic commitment to public engagement with research

The first aim of the PER Catalysts programme was to create a culture within the grant holding HEIs where excellent PER is formalised and embedded, through strategic commitment to public engagement with research. Strategic commitment is a critical factor in creating a culture for public engagement with research. Drawing on findings from the work of the Beacons, the NCCPE explains that:

“Without a sense of mission – a shared understanding of the purpose and value of public engagement – it is very difficult to build momentum. By expressing this commitment in your institution’s strategic planning, you can then begin to mobilise the resources and enthusiasm for effecting significant cultural and operational change.”

Evidence from project documentation showed that the eight funded HEIs had all found ways to signal their institution’s commitment to public engagement with research by the end of the programme. This Chapter examines HEIs’ activities and the outcomes of these more closely, in terms of the extent to which they had:

- Embedded a commitment to PER in corporate plans.
- Developed and established a shared understanding of PER.
- Developed institutional PER strategies, or included PER in other strategies and planning documents.
- Created senior leadership and engagement champions to oversee and promote PER.
- Made a financial commitment to PER.

3.1. Embedding a commitment to PER in corporate plans

Four of the eight Catalyst projects had achieved the inclusion of PER in their host HEIs’ corporate plans. The significance of these changes, and the time and effort they took to bring about, are evidenced in the extracts cited below:

“Public Engagement features in the emerging strategic plan as a pervasive theme across each of the pillars of research, teaching and people. This is a significant step change in how engagement is viewed within our institution; from a role within a stand-alone strand of the previous 2011-2015 plan to an integrated model in the emerging plan thus placing public engagement at the heart of the ‘academic role’.”

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18 http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/planning-change/mission
“Public Engagement has been written into the Corporate Plan to be published at the end of 2015. This has been achieved by the senior leadership lobbying the University’s Executive Board and Corporate Plan operational group team over three years.”

As the NCCPE puts it, embedding a commitment to public engagement in a corporate plan or mission statement, provides a powerful way for an institution to frame “their civic and intellectual purpose and their desire to contribute to ‘public good’”\textsuperscript{19}, an outcome that was echoed by several Catalysts in their final reports and evaluation documents. For some Catalysts, the formal recognition of public engagement within their institutions’ corporate plans may also enable more staff to view PER as a legitimate and valued activity.

“PE is more widely accepted across the University and not seen as maverick, irrelevant or a waste of researcher time”.

3.2. Developing and establishing a shared understanding of PER

Four of the eight HEIs made specific reference to their development of a shared understanding of public engagement, embedded in university-wide strategies. Some were using the NCCPE’s definition, as set out below:

“Public engagement describes the many ways in which higher education institutions and their staff and students can connect and share their work with the public. Done well public engagement generates mutual benefit, with all parties learning from each other through sharing knowledge, expertise and skills. In the process, it can build trust, understanding and collaboration, and increase the sector’s relevance to, and impact on, civil society.”

Others had extended the NCCPE definition to develop a university-wide understanding of ‘engaged research’, in response to feedback that researchers were confused about the term ‘public engagement’ or needed a broader term for engagement whereby non-academics can co-create research.

“Engaged research encompasses the different ways that researchers meaningfully interact with various stakeholders over any or all stages of a research process, from issue formulation, the production or co-creation of new knowledge, to knowledge evaluation and dissemination.”

“We found that talking in broader terms of ‘engagement’, without prefacing it with the word ‘public’ helped people think of the broader ways in which non-academics could co-create research. The Catalyst was able to secure institutional commitment to the principle that a co-creational model of engaged research was the aspirational gold standard of publicly-engaged research at the University. The fundamental commitment to the ethos of co-creative PER as ‘the way research is done at [this

\textsuperscript{19}http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/planning-change/mission

\textsuperscript{20}https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/manifesto_for_public_engagement_final_january_2010.pdf
university]’... stands as the most striking evidence of the culture change achieved by the Catalyst.”

For half of the HEIs, the nature of PER as a two-way exchange between researchers and publics, integrated throughout the whole research life-cycle, was central to the articulation of their shared understanding.

For the other HEIs, there was evidence that they had focussed on developing a shared understanding, but there was less explicit reference in their project documentation to development and agreement of a specific definition of PER. One HEI talked about the overall approach to culture change that their Catalyst embodied, explaining that this was to encourage PER as a two-way dialogue and as a means to enhance research. This approach was summed up in their final report as follows:

“The overall approach to culture change was to challenge our academics and postgraduates to think differently about PE, for academics to get involved in PE not as an add on, but embedded and integrated into academic research and teaching through encouraging a culture of two-way conversations with partners/stakeholders and the public themselves.”

Other Catalysts talked more loosely about how their projects had helped to ‘stimulate discussion’ or ‘change conversations’ about what engagement means.

“The conversation around engagement has changed, moving to a better understanding of what it means to be engaged. One of the dramatic changes has been the ways in which staff and students talk about public engagement. Rather than needing a stronger definition, what we needed was a shared vocabulary and this is definitely beginning to develop. This is aided by the visible senior-level buy-in, and by the [public engagement] team physically going to as many events and meetings as possible to spread the conversation.”

There was no clear evidence of the extent to which definitions and shared understandings of PER, where they existed, had been fully embedded into the thinking and practice of staff across each of the Catalyst HEIs. Evaluation reports from two Catalyst projects highlighted that, despite work to articulate a shared understanding, public engagement in research still meant different things to different people, explained by one Catalyst as follows:

“It is worth noting that a shared understanding of public engagement had not fully developed. Senior management and the [public engagement team] are clear that public engagement involved bringing non-academic groups into the research process for mutual benefit, with the ultimate aim of improving research quality, research impact and research visibility... the end of project survey and [the] evaluation highlights that this articulation of public engagement has not been fully adopted.”

However, all eight of the Catalyst projects cited examples or case studies of recent or on-going engagement activities that reflected researchers’ understanding of the benefits of engaged research as a mutually beneficial dialogue with the potential to be embedded at different stages of the research process. These examples show that, for some researchers at least, an institutional-level shared understanding or agreed definition of best practice in public
engagement has had beneficial outcomes for their everyday working lives. In his contribution to a final report, the Deputy Vice Chancellor from one Catalyst HEI reflected that previously, many academics had limited themselves to “public communication” of their research findings, and had been sceptical about the relevance of the impact agenda for their own work; now, their understanding of engaged research and impact is “much more sophisticated”, and “as a consequence, there is already overwhelming enthusiasm for engagement and impact activities going through to REF 2020”. He concluded that some of the strongest evidence for culture change is to be found “in the pathways to impact statements of current grant applications – when I look at these, and review some of them, I find that there is a much greater awareness of what public engagement actually means, of the value of co-creation, and I tend to see that narrative in many more grants than I would have done”.

3.3. Developing institutional PER strategies and including PER in other strategies and planning documents

Learning from the Beacons showed that it can be very helpful to develop a dedicated strategy for engagement. The NCCPE suggests that this “should articulate why engagement matters, how different parts of the institution can contribute, and how best to ensure it is effectively co-ordinated and supported across the institution.”

Two HEIs had developed an institutional strategic plan for public engagement with research. In both cases, these strategic plans were yet to be fully implemented and were described as “being revised” and “to be published” at the time of writing. Both strategies, once in place, aimed to cover the period from 2015 to 2020.

Other HEIs had chosen to focus their efforts on ensuring the integration and alignment of PER with other plans and strategies, as summarised below:

- Many HEIs had expressed a commitment to PER through institutional-level planning processes, including strategies covering research and innovation, research impact, human resources, and international work.
- In some Catalyst-funded universities, schools, faculties and other academic units were now required to report on their PER activities and forward plans, as part of annual research reviews, or other unit-level planning and accountability processes.
- Some university departments and schools had developed their own PER strategies.

The different approaches by Catalysts to embedding PER in strategic-level documents and processes reflected the shared understanding of PER already adopted as well as the wider institutional contexts of their host HEIs. One Catalyst summed this up in their final report as follows:

“This deep relationship between research, engagement and impact has resulted in the decision to not develop faculty and departmental public engagement strategies as originally envisaged. Rather, faculties and departments are developing strategies for impactful, engaged research. At least two departments have independently decided to

21 http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/planning-change/mission
“develop a public engagement strategy: Pharmacy & Pharmacology and Education and [we] are supporting them.”

In its evaluation and final reports, this HEI had noted several positive outcomes of its more distributed approach to embedding PER in plans and strategies and believed its research findings showed evidence for:

- More departments citing their public engagement work alongside their research and teaching when presenting themselves at showcases, open days or celebrations.
- Increased responsibility by individual departments for their own PER strategies, including a commitment to activate significant changes for future practice.
- More cross-university understanding of the role, importance and value of public engagement with research.
- End-of-project survey results indicating that over 80% of staff now feel the university places high or medium importance on public engagement.

3.4. Creating senior leadership and champions for PER

The NCCPE highlights that creating a network of formal and informal champions helps “to encourage the values, attitudes and behaviours which create a supportive culture for public engagement; ensuring that it becomes a natural and visible part of everyday work, conversations and decision-making across the institution”\(^{22}\). Senior leadership, departmental and faculty leadership, staff and student engagement champions and support from the public and wider community are all needed to help fully embed PER. The idea of developing and supporting champions was also set out in RCUK’s call document for the Catalysts programme, which suggested that:

“... this culture change element could be in the form of a strategic champion working at a high level with senior management support and links across the institution. This high profile individual would be tasked with advocating and embedding public engagement with research (using the principles of the Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research) and also supporting researchers to engage within and across their university.” (RCUK call document, page 3)

All of the Catalyst HEIs recognised the importance of high level champions who could create institutional respect and recognition for engagement activities and represent a PER ‘voice’ on strategic working groups.

“Having the Vice-Principal for Public Engagement post has meant that at all senior level discussions we had a representative and a voice ... having the dedicated role and voice has created a high level of institutional respect for public engagement that we would not have otherwise had.”

\(^{22}\) http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/planning-change/leadership
Most of the Catalysts had found ways to embed PER as part of the formal responsibilities of influential senior managers. In many cases, PIs for the projects were themselves senior leaders, such as Vice-Chancellors, Pro-Vice-Chancellors or Deputy Vice-Chancellors and their commitment to PER continued beyond the end of the funded programme of work. At one university, for example, the PI for the project was the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, and from July 2015, public engagement has been part of her formal job description. Another HEI had introduced a senior leadership role to work as the operational lead for the Catalyst project, connecting senior executives with faculties and researchers. This role has been formally retained as the university’s Champion for PER and other members of the now disbanded PER Catalyst team have retained leadership roles (with workload allocations) to support researchers as they plan for and collect evidence of research impact. Another university had successfully applied for two Heads of Department to participate in a pilot public engagement leadership programme set up by the Wellcome Trust. This is targeting 14 Heads of Department from UK universities to work with their research community to embed and support a culture of public engagement in their department/institute. Each participant has a small seed fund of £2,000 to spend on activities to achieve this.

The importance of leadership development, and mainstreaming PER as part of generic professional development, were highlighted as means to achieving several outcomes including improved promotion routes and raised awareness of public engagement. Several HEIs provided details of how their leadership development was focussed on embedding PER.

“During the Catalyst project we invested heavily in identifying champions and in leadership development of our research active academics... PI Development programmes since 2012 have included embedding PE into the research process (rather than information sessions pre-2012).”

One Catalyst cited evaluation evidence that showed an increase in awareness of the Concordat for Engaging the Public in Research, much of which it believed could be attributed to the efforts of its two lead staff in highlighting the importance of the engagement agenda across the institution and through their input to leadership development courses.

By the end of the Catalysts programme, some HEIs had made changes to their formal governance arrangements to ensure institutional oversight of public engagement, thus further embedding PER within responsibilities of senior staff. One university had set up an Advisory Group for Public Engagement, chaired by the Vice Principal for External Affairs and reporting to the Research Policy committee. Another had incorporated public engagement into the remit of the Impact Sub-Group of the University Research Committee. Steering and Working Groups had also been set up which comprised senior academics and professional services staff (e.g. Directors of Marketing and Communications, HR, Finance). Whilst at a third HEI, an Operational Board for oversight of PER was established which comprised Associate Deans of Research, senior researchers and key professional service staff.

In addition to embedding PER within the duties of senior leaders, six of the eight HEIs had introduced the idea of PER champions, each taking a slightly different approach to
implementing this strategy for encouraging and supporting engagement activities across their institutions.

- The University of Aberdeen’s Public Engagement with Research Unit (PERU) established a ‘College Co-ordinator’ role - a 0.2FTE secondment for three academic staff to improve roots into the academic community. The three academic public engagement co-ordinators worked alongside the PERU’s two core staff to support and encourage the development of PER within each of the university’s three academic colleges. For example, the co-ordinators would be present at their respective college inductions, decision making committees and staff training sessions. Specifically, coordinators were asked to develop networks within their own college. Coordinators were research-active staff members; peers to the community they were supporting and thus well-placed to identify barriers and challenges at the academic ‘coal face’.

- The Public Engagement Unit at the University of Bath set up a network of self-nominated ‘Public Engagement Advocates’. The advocates were a central component of the Catalyst project’s model of change: a dispersed programme of work through networks of public engagement practice which were felt to be more robust than work initiated and controlled by a central unit. The advocates have led on a number of targeted initiatives established by the Engaged360@Bath project.

- At the University of Exeter, fourteen ‘Champions for Public Engagement with Research’ were appointed over three rounds between 2013 and 2015. The Catalyst project’s final report described the champions as researchers who were passionate about public engagement and who wanted to develop their skills and experience whilst supporting colleagues within their research area. A small amount of their time was bought out to dedicate to their activities. The PER champions acted as connectors and advocates for the Impact and Engaged Research Network. They also became advocates for the Catalyst project and established their own branches of the network through their engagement activities and internal advocacy.

- The Open University’s ‘Champion for Public Engagement with Research’ had overall operational responsibility for coordinating and leading all aspects of the Catalyst project, alongside helping to shape strategic objectives for OU public engagement with research. In addition, a network of academic ‘Champions of Engaged Research’ supported and mentored individual staff.

- Queen Mary University London’s Centre for Public Engagement (CPE) instigated the role of ‘Directors of Public Engagement’ in individual schools. From 2015 onwards each of the university’s eight schools will have such a post, with a centrally-funded workload allocation. This new initiative has come from the schools themselves, with support from the CPE.

- The PEI team at the University of Sheffield have supported a network of ‘public engagement champions’ at all levels of the institution, identified in their funding application as “individuals who undertook exemplary PE activity”. These individuals have been recognised by the Vice-Chancellor for the work they do and their roles have become more formal, where previously the institution offered little formal support. They have specifically been involved in the Mobile University mentoring (training for speakers) scheme and through presenting masterclasses.
Catalyst’s final report suggests that their role has helped embed a culture of PE with high profile key academics championing the activity.

In their final reports and evaluation documents, three Catalysts provided evidence for some key outcomes resulting from the introduction of PER champions within their institutions:

- The University of Aberdeen’s college coordinators have provided a profile for the public engagement agenda in each College which, when combined with the central unit, has increased the effectiveness of the support available to researchers. The coordinators have helped to embed PER in key college committees responsible for research policy and have supported and permitted experimental approaches to public engagement. As a result, the Director of one College Research Committee is now “supportive of staff to embed public engagement into their research, and values its contribution to the development of impact narratives for the next REF exercise”.

- The University of Bath’s advocate scheme was described in both the Catalyst’s final and evaluation reports as a ‘mixed success’. A number of reasons for this were given, including advocates leaving, or going on long-term sick leave; lack of clarity about the scope and purpose of the advocate role; and a need for improved support and mentoring on culture change for advocates themselves. Despite these caveats, the evaluation report highlighted that advocates had helped to raise the profile of public engagement and increase institutional embedding of engagement. The formal titling of the advocate role had enabled one person to push the PER agenda forward within her department in the confidence that this was something the university was committed to. Their evaluation also suggested that the seed fund project holders and others supported by the Public Engagement Unit have become informal advocates for public engagement.

- The University of Exeter’s Catalyst team ran a focus group to explore outcomes of the champions for public engagement role. They found that being a champion enabled people to connect with other staff doing PER work across the university and combat isolation; to formalise existing engagement work; to link engaged research with teaching; and to help build a research career involving PER. Champions said that the title was important as a way of bring visible and outcomes of this included being asked to take part in activities and events that would not have previously been open to them.

### 3.5. Demonstrating a financial commitment to support PER

RCUK’s call document stated that all Catalyst-funded HEIs were expected to show their financial commitment to PER by providing matched funding, or in kind support to an equivalent value, to support their planned work. The focus of the Catalysts programme was on developing processes and structures for supporting PER, such as salaries of key staff and capacity building activities. RCUK explained that grants could not therefore be used to fund actual PER activities by researchers.

In their reports, HEIs provided evidence of their financial commitment to supporting public engagement in research in two keys ways: firstly, through the allocation of strategic funding to
support elements of PER during the lifetime of the Catalyst project; and secondly, through the on-going investment of strategic funds to sustain PER activity from April 2015 onwards.

Six HEIs provided details of the PER support and activities they had funded themselves\(^{23}\) during the lifetime of their Catalyst projects. These included:

- Full or part-funding for PER related posts.
- Award schemes to recognise and reward excellence in PER\(^{24}\).
- Seed funding schemes to support, explore and develop aspects of PER.
- Other small and large grants schemes.

As a result of their project activities, seven of the eight HEIs confirmed the outcome that on-going financial commitment was in place to sustain central PER support post-Catalyst, from April 2015. For some, funding for continued PER support and co-ordination was assured from one to three years. For others, PER activities had been embedded within core university delivery structures and would be funded indefinitely or at least until the next review of the institutional strategy or corporate plan.

The extent of on-going financial commitment to other PER activities (internal awards and funding schemes, provision of PER champions, networking events, etc.) was unclear, although a few HEIs did specify that certain initiatives would continue to be supported either in the short or longer term.

### 3.6. Summary

The eight HEIs involved in the Catalysts programme had all found a number of significant ways to signal their strategic commitment to PER.

- Four HEIs had achieved the inclusion of PER in their host HEIs’ corporate plans, two HEIs had developed an institutional PER strategy, and almost all provided evidence of the inclusion of PER in other strategies and planning documents.
- Half of the Catalyst-funded HEIs had developed and defined a shared understanding of PER, the wording of which was now embedded in university-wide strategic documents. For the others, there was evidence that they had focussed on developing a shared understanding, but less explicit reference in their reports to development and agreement of a specific definition of PER.
- By the end of the Catalysts programme, some HEIs had made changes to their formal governance arrangements to ensure institutional oversight of PER activities, and all eight recognised the importance of high level champions who can create institutional respect and recognition for engagement activities and represent a PER ‘voice’ on strategic working groups. Many of the Catalyst projects had also created

\(^{23}\) Not using RCUK funding.  
\(^{24}\) Other Catalysts had also run awards schemes, funded under the RCUK grant and hence not referenced in this section.
PER champions to support and embed a culture of engaged research at an academic level.

- Most HEIs provided details of their financial commitment to public engagement in research through institutional funding of a range of PER support and activities during the lifetime of their Catalyst projects. In addition, almost all HEIs confirmed that on-going financial commitment was in place to sustain central PER support post-Catalyst, from April 2015.
4. Integration of public engagement into the core research activities of HEIs

RCUK’s call document stated that in addition to being led at an institutional level, Catalyst projects were expected to engage with university-wide processes and practices. Finding ways to integrate PER into HEIs’ core, everyday business is an essential component for embedding a culture of engagement, demonstrating that engagement is valued as integral to quality research.

This Chapter examines evidence from HEIs about how their Catalyst projects:

- Provided practical support for core research activities that emphasised the importance of PER.
- Measured the quality and impact of PER activities.

4.1. Practical support for core research activities

All of the eight Catalyst projects had developed models for delivering a range of practical support which facilitated the integration of public engagement into many of the core research activities of their host HEIs. This included:

- Support with developing funding applications including ‘pathways to impact’ statements.
- Evidencing PER activities - e.g. support with preparing impact statements for the REF, submission of PER activities within the RCUK Research Outcomes System or ResearchFish.
- Input and guidance on including/embedding engagement activities into different parts of the research process.
- Changes to ethical and administrative processes to facilitate PER.

Support with developing funding applications including ‘pathways to impact’ statements

All but one of the Catalysts offered tailored support to researchers on including public engagement activities in their funding applications, including advice and input on ‘pathways to impact’ statements if needed. In all cases this was provided on a one-to-one, bespoke basis by a member of the Catalyst-funded team, project or unit. A few HEIs also offered application support via other means such as group workshops, master classes, case studies and good practice guidance materials or toolkits.

In their reports, some of the Catalysts supplied details of the numbers of staff and/or proposals supported by project teams over the lifetime of the award. Where available, these outcome data are summarised below:

- University of Aberdeen - between 2012 and 2015 the Catalyst-funded PERU provided 100 cases of tailored advice to researchers on embedding engaged practice into grant applications and cross referencing it to ‘pathways to impact’
and/or dissemination plans. College coordinators have also supported staff with funding bids, including one successful application for an AHRC Early Career grant in 2014, which had embedded a range of PER activities.

- University of Bath – staff from the Public Engagement Unit supported 112 researchers with elements of their grant proposals over the lifetime of the Catalysts programme. They had not tracked success of the applications but knew of one EPSRC Fellowship that was secured.

- University of Exeter - throughout the lifetime of the Catalyst project, the team had direct input into over 50 research bids ensuring public engagement was an embedded part of the proposal. More than 250 researchers have had one-to-one support from the Project Manager. In 2014 the Exeter Catalyst was involved in securing a Wellcome Trust Society Award to hold a number of public engagement events as part of Einstein’s Garden at the Green Man Festival from 2015 to 2018.

- UCL Institute of Education - twelve proposals were supported in total over the lifetime of the Catalyst project, seven led by early career researchers. Half were successful in winning funding, including: a bid for £5 million in funding for five years up to 2019 for the UK’s first research Centre for Global Higher Education, co-funded by HEFCE and the ESRC; a collaborative series of ESRC funded seminars; a three year Leverhulme Trust research fellowship; and a £900,000 grant for dental research that included significant public engagement work with children.

- Open University – the Catalyst team directly supported 37 research proposals with bespoke advice and support.

- Queen Mary University of London – 296 academics attended public engagement surgeries to help them develop ideas for funding.

- University of Sheffield – the PEI team worked with colleagues in Research and Innovation Services and academics to accurately cost and write public engagement sections of research grant applications. The team has supported grants totalling over £3.5 million potential research income and with £1,762,750 awarded with an average of 5% spent on public engagement.

Not all of the projects supplied information and it was not always possible to disaggregate data about numbers of researchers supported from numbers of funding proposals supported. However, the details cited above suggest that at least 800 academic staff were supported to consider and include PER in the development of at least 300 grant applications over the lifetime of the Catalysts programme.

Other forms of support in developing funding bids were also made available. For example, at the University of Aberdeen, Catalyst funding was used to support the development of a Public Research Interest Group with a remit to provide lay expertise in reviewing research proposals. Since its inception in 2014, the group has provided input to around 15 funding applications, and now has more than 50 public members.

The UCL Institute of Education’s Catalyst team supplemented the one-to-one support they provided around ‘pathways to impact’ statements with additional guidance materials developed from the annotated text of successful bids. The purpose was to extend the reach of
the team’s support by encouraging other researchers to consider how they could use similar or modified engagement strategies in their own work. These materials were made accessible on the IOE’s intranet and are now used to support the development of future funding proposals. IOE’s final report cited two examples of positive outcomes as a result of this approach:

- A Senior Research Officer successfully developed a research proposal with support from the Catalyst Team, who she said “made loads of amazing suggestions”. The applicant was impressed at the personal support given to her and when the proposal was peer-reviewed, the ‘pathways to impact’ section was particularly praised.

- The Catalyst team helped to hone the public engagement element of a bid for dental research, which was particularly well received by the funder’s peer reviewers. The funding application was successful, securing approximately £900,000 to research self-bonding, bacteria-inhibiting, tooth-coloured dental fillings that promote greater natural tooth repair for children.

Evidencing PER activities

All of the Catalyst projects were evidencing PER activities through collecting and publishing case studies, some of which included data on impact and outcomes of public engagement work by researchers.

Half of the Catalysts also provided information about support to researchers in terms of more systematic evidencing of PER activities. This included support with preparing impact statements for the REF, submission of PER activities within the RCUK Research Outcomes System or ResearchFish, or other forms of formal feedback on the outcomes and impact of PER. One university had recruited an additional member of staff to progress these activities further:

“Our initial findings highlighted an urgent need for dedicated support for generating and systematically collecting evidence of the impacts of engaged research. Our interventions in working with OU researchers at all levels have emphasised the importance of support in this area. We have therefore recruited a part time Research Associate (0.4FTE to 30 March 2015) to a new role within the project team to support this area, e.g. by mentoring researchers supported under the Seed Funding Scheme.”

Input and guidance on including/embedding engagement activities into different parts of the research process

All eight of the HEIs provided examples of how their Catalyst projects had offered input and guidance on PER throughout the research life cycle. This included advice on embedding engagement activities into different parts of the research process, from establishing a topic area and associated research questions, to designing methodologies and forms of dissemination that enabled public participation. This was offered both on a one-to-one, bespoke basis, and through other interactions such as networking events, training, blogs and publication of case studies. The bespoke input on embedding PER throughout the research process was often linked to the development and review of funding applications. Other forms
of input tended to focus on stories of effective PER, or information about specific methods and techniques that researchers might want to consider.

HEIs described a range of approaches to promoting PER throughout the research process, which included:

“Peer review of applications to help identify public engagement activities at different stages of a project’s lifecycle - from the development of impact plans within grant applications to the dissemination of results in novel and exciting ways.”

“Working with Marketing and Communications to develop the use of social media for engagement.”

“Establishment of an Internal Research focus group, to share expertise and to consider how to transfer PE practice across disciplines.”

“The overall approach [was] ... for academics to get involved in PE not as an add-on, but embedded and integrated into academic research and teaching through encouraging a culture of two way conversations with partners/stakeholders or with the public themselves.”

A researcher from one Catalyst-funded HEI described the outcomes for her research as a result of input from the project team:

“Although I had numerous ideas regarding how I wanted to involve children, I was unsure of the practicalities and resources that were available to develop involvement methods. I had attended a number of informative presentations hosted by the Catalyst team and consulted with them on numerous occasions to comment on my proposed methods. I developed a game play approach for conducting the focus groups based on familiar party style games. This yielded some interesting findings, which were incorporated into the funding bid.”

Changes to ethical and administrative processes to facilitate PER

In addition to providing practical support to embed PER, HEIs also used the Catalyst funding as a lever to make changes to ethical and administrative processes.

A few HEIs were working with their university and faculty ethics committees to ensure that committee members understood, and were equipped with tools, to review research which proposed participatory methods or other forms of engagement.

“[We have] worked with the Ethics Committee to include PE and participatory research in materials ... the ethics of participatory research and public engagement now appears within the [university’s] Research Ethics guidance materials.”

“The team is working with University Ethics committees around the identification of co-created research, whereby ethics approval is not required for the process of co-creation.”
One Catalyst team was also considering the financial and administrative changes that might best facilitate PER.

“We have created a working group to look at issues of financial reimbursement for people’s time to be involved in research, such that it does not affect any benefits they may be in receipt of. This work is ongoing and is to ensure that we are able to include everyone who wishes to be involved in research and reimburse them equitably; other models such as time-banking are also being considered.”

4.2. Measuring the quality and impact of PER activities

Undertaking regular monitoring and evaluation of the efficacy of public engagement is an essential part of ensuring PER continues to be part of the institutional culture. The NCCPE explains that evaluation and evidence gathering helps improve the quality, impact and value for money of an institution’s public engagement and can demonstrate the benefits of PER activities to funders and other stakeholders.25

HEIs were asked to provide details of any research or evaluation work undertaken during the Catalyst project to inform practice and planning and to set out any future plans for on-going monitoring and evaluation. Where appropriate, findings from Catalysts’ own evaluation and research have been incorporated into the main text of this report, particularly where they provide evidence of outcomes and impact of public engagement activities and outputs.

All of the Catalysts had made efforts to conduct or commission some form of research and evaluation work to help them understand the quality and impact of their activities. A range of approaches were evidenced in their project documentation and are summarised as follows:

- Five Catalysts teams elected to conduct their own research to collect evidence about the progress and impact of their projects.
- In two cases, other university staff from outside the Catalyst team were recruited to undertake evaluation tasks.
- One HEI had commissioned an independent evaluation from an external research organisation which ran alongside the Catalyst and reported at interim and final stages.
- Three Catalysts had submitted stand-alone final reports of evaluation work undertaken or commissioned.
- Three others provided reports on their evaluation activities in full, or in summary form, as annexes or appendices to their final reports.
- One devoted two main sections of their final report to explaining the rationale and findings of the research approach taken by their Catalyst, with links to four supporting publications.

25 http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/planning-change/support
• Another Catalyst evidenced their evaluation activities only in the main text of their final report with no other documents cited.

In terms of methodology, some Catalysts had employed a pre- and post-programme design, comparing baseline data collected at the start of their project with follow-up data collected in 2015 using the same research tools. One Catalyst’s approach involved comparative analysis of existing institution-wide CROS and PIRLS\textsuperscript{26} data, whilst others designed and implemented their own survey tools, alongside qualitative interviews. Two Catalyst projects had chosen to focus their efforts primarily on summative evaluation against aims and objectives, using qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups.

Others took a more formative approach to using research and evaluation to inform the development of their projects, the outcomes of which were neatly described by one Catalyst as follows:

“[We used an] ongoing process of reflective practice which involved reviewing activities and adjusting processes before the next iteration (e.g. seed funds, awards, training). The Celebrating Engaged Research Showcase annual event was developed in response to baseline evaluation. An online, central resource for PE information was requested and has since been implemented.”

A few Catalyst teams used a mix of methods to explore and inform their Catalyst work. For one, this involved an annual review using the EDGE tool, focus groups with seed fund recipients and champions, and collection of feedback from others involved in the Catalyst to “capture best practice and expertise in a regular and timely fashion so that it can feedback into the Programme in an iterative process”. For another HEI, initial ‘diagnostic research’ using the CROS and PIRLS survey tools was undertaken to explore researchers’ experiences and understanding of public engagement. The findings were used to explore the engagement support that researchers needed and to respond to these within the work of the Catalyst. One such need was for rigorous, systematic accounts of the impact of PER. The Catalyst team responded to this by supporting three seed funded projects to explore the impacts of engaged research and to publish their reports of their engagement work.

Several HEIs were planning to continue exploring methods for measuring the quality and impact of PER activities. For example, the University of Bath specified that its focus for 2015-2018 would be to build a strong evidence base for the value of public engagement with research. This will include measures such as increased grant income, higher quality and more diverse research outputs, and clear research impacts.

\textsuperscript{26} The Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) and the Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS) are run biennially by VITAE and gather anonymous data about working conditions, career aspirations and career development opportunities for research staff and research leaders in higher education institutions. Both surveys can be adapted to include institution-specific questions and institutions can compare their own results with the UK aggregate or form benchmarking clubs. See https://www.vitae.ac.uk/impact-and-evaluation
4.3. Outcomes of integrating PER into the core research activities of HEIs

This Chapter has already outlined two quantifiable outcomes of efforts made by Catalyst teams to integrate PER into the core research activities of their host HEIs, namely that:

- At least 800 academic staff were supported by Catalyst teams to consider and include public engagement in the development of research funding applications.
- At least 300 grant applications, which included an element of PER, were submitted over the lifetime of the Catalysts programme.

In addition, several of the projects’ final and evaluation reports cited evidence of more qualitative outcomes:

- Public engagement adds value to a university’s core business - through the Catalysts programme, the funded HEIs had developed an understanding of public engagement as a way of delivering high quality research and teaching.
- Including public engagement in research grant applications makes bids stronger - several HEIs suggested that many of their successful proposals had received input and advice from Catalyst teams, particularly with preparing ‘pathways to impact’ statements and plans for embedding PER throughout the proposed research project.

As one evaluation report put it:

“For the first time a significant proportion of respondents talked about PE improving their research, or the desire to understand the public which they were engaging with”.

Another Catalyst’s final report, quoting a staff member, summed up the longer-term impact of integrating public engagement with research into core research activities as follows:

“I think the whole process of doing public engagement, if you do it well, is informing and enlightening for the researchers doing it and it improves your ability to write research proposals but actually getting people to realise that, is sometimes difficult. But that’s where we need to try and improve.”

4.4. Summary

The Catalysts provided evidence in their reports about how they had integrated public engagement into some of the core research activities undertaken by their host HEIs. Specifically, HEIs had:

- Delivered a range of practical support which facilitated the integration of public engagement into core research activities including:
  - Support with developing funding applications and ‘pathways to impact’ statements, resulting in PER-related support to at least 800 academic staff and input to at least 300 grant applications.
  - Evidencing PER activities and impact.
• Measured the quality and impact of their funded PER activities, through undertaking or commissioning research/evaluation work to inform the planning and practice of their projects:
  o Five Catalyst teams conducted their own research to collect evidence about the progress and impact of their projects.
  o Two contracted other university staff from outside the Catalyst team to undertake evaluation tasks.
  o One had commissioned an independent evaluation from an external research organisation which ran alongside the Catalyst project and reported at interim and final stages.
  o Some Catalysts had employed a pre- and post-programme design, comparing baseline data collected at the start of their programme with follow-up data collected in 2015 using the same research tools.
  o A few had chosen to focus their efforts primarily on summative evaluation against aims and objectives, using qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups.
  o Other HEIs took a more formative approach, using mixed methods to explore and inform their Catalyst work.
  o Several HEIs were planning to continue exploring methods for measuring the quality and impact of PER activities post-Catalyst.
5. Recognition and reward of researchers involved in public engagement

Learning from the Beacons initiative highlighted that the reward and recognition of researchers is an important way for HEIs to show they support and value public engagement\(^\text{27}\). Researchers need to know that their engagement work is recognised as a legitimate activity and that there is potential for PER to enhance their academic career. One of the Concordat’s\(^\text{28}\) four key principles is that “researchers are recognised and valued for their involvement with public engagement activities”.

All eight Catalyst projects gave examples of the ways in which their input had helped bring about new processes or changes to existing processes for the recognition and reward of researchers. These included changes to appraisal and performance review processes, job descriptions, promotion criteria and workload management. Some Catalysts had set up new processes for celebrating public engagement through their own awards schemes, or collaborating with existing awards by adding a category for recognising excellence in PER.

5.1. Changes to job descriptions, performance reviews and promotion criteria

All eight of the Catalyst projects had found ways to flag up the importance of incorporating public engagement into job descriptions, performance reviews and promotion criteria. It was clear that these changes were hard-won and that access to funded project resources (time, senior leadership support, prioritisation of PER) had helped to make a transformational difference.

For most of the HEIs involved in the Catalysts programme, significant changes to recruitment, appraisal and promotion procedures to embed public engagement were achieved within the lifetime of their funding as the following examples from final reports show:

“PE was incorporated into the generic job descriptions for all tiers for use in recruitment for new roles - this was a new initiative during the Catalyst project ... Probation and promotion documents were revised to highlight that PE can demonstrate excellence in research (this was done as part of the routine cycle of review and revision).”

“Academic and research staff now need to demonstrate good quality public engagement activity in research and/or teaching as part of their promotional objectives ... Public Engagement with Research activities are now formally embedded in Performance Review processes and the Workload Framework Model with public engagement in research acknowledged as part of promotions criteria.”

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\(^\text{27}\) http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/planning-change/recognition  
\(^\text{28}\) http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/pe/Concordat/
“Public engagement is clearly included in the promotions criteria, and has been since 2013. The senior staff are all briefed for how to include this in their deliberations, and we have had several instances now of staff where public engagement is explicitly mentioned in their promotions letters.”

For a few Catalyst-funded HEIs, discussions about changes to reward and recognition were still on-going, but considerable progress had already been made within the timescale of the programme.

“[The] review of PE in job descriptions and in promotion criteria ...is ongoing but the intended outcome is that public engagement will feature across all research and academic related job descriptions that will filter through to workload models within schools and colleges. This is not an insignificant body of work and in a University like [this one] the process of change is understandably lengthy.”

“The [Catalyst] team has progressed work to include PE in the reward and recognition processes at [this university]. [We have] submitted a paper to HR which proposes the inclusion of PE in Reward & Recognition processes, the promotions criteria and annual review process. The paper is in consultation and the outcome should be announced at the end of 2015.”

5.2. Workload management

Recognition of PER activities through workload management and formalising certain staff roles (for example as engagement champions) was another core area of research support where public engagement was being embedded. Legitimising and rewarding public engagement activities as part of recognised job roles, or through a workload framework, encourages public engagement activity\(^\text{29}\). Six HEIs made specific mention of changes to workload frameworks or role recognition, which took into account PER activities. For example, the University of Nottingham established a workload framework model to formally recognise citizenship and public engagement activities by academic and research staff. The definition of citizenship activity (including public engagement and outreach activity) constituted a core element of the framework, accounting for up to 15% overall.

5.3. Outcomes of activities to embed PER in personnel processes

Catalysts’ final and evaluation reports cited several positive outcomes that may be linked, in part, to their efforts to embed public engagement with research in some of their universities’ personnel procedures. Overall these show a recognition of the value, importance and legitimacy of incorporating engagement into a research career. As one senior leader put it:

“The Catalyst project has provided me with the ammunition I needed to be able to change our approach to PE at the institutional level. For example, PE activities were included in the University’s workload framework which was launched in 2014 and can now be formally acknowledged in an academic’s workload. Moreover, I have been

\(^{29}\) http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/planning-change/recognition
able to get PE activities recognised in both our promotions criteria and annual Professional Development and Performance Review process for academics and importantly PE activities are now recognised via the Vice-Chancellor’s achievement award. These changes, while relatively small, can have a significant impact on the way colleagues view and participate in PE activities and over the last few years I have seen a significant shift in the way academics engage with and talk about PE activities with a growing number seeing this as an important part of what they do.”

One project’s evaluation report cited results from a staff survey which suggested a large proportion of academic and support staff valued PER as a potential platform for career enhancement, through additional funding streams and new forms of career recognition. Findings from another Catalyst’s evaluation indicated a clear shift in staff motivation for undertaking PER: fewer staff talked about public engagement as a ‘duty’ or in response to pressure from funders or managers.

“Enjoyment was ranked as a key reason for being involved in 2015, and for the first time a significant proportion of respondents talked about PE improving their research, or the desire to understand the public which they were engaging with.”

A third Catalyst’s evaluation data suggested a 20% increase in the proportion of academic staff reporting positive attitudes towards the value of public engagement activities in the context of a research portfolio.

In terms of outcomes of changes to promotion procedures, two HEIs provided evidence of four PER-led promotions to Professor during the timescale of their Catalyst projects. For one HEI, the integration of public engagement into career pathways and promotion criteria was cited as a key reason for two recent academic promotions as explained below:

“We gained formal approval from Senate for revised and extended promotion criteria that include a Knowledge Exchange route from Lecturer through to Professorial grades, also making these revised profiles available to the other PER Catalyst universities and across the HE sector. Two academics gained promotion to Professor when the scheme was first introduced, documenting evidence of excellence in engaged research as a significant part of their case.”

For the second HEI, although work to include PER in the promotions procedure was still in progress, the Catalyst team believed that recognition of two researchers as Public Engagement Champions had been a key factor in their promotion to professorships.

“The [Catalyst] team has progressed work to include PE in the reward and recognition processes… The review is currently being considered. However, one of the PE champions […], became a Professor in January 2015 and PE was cited as one of the reasons he had been promoted. In addition, Dr […], a PE champion received his professorship in December 2014, following significant public engagement work during the previous 18 months.”

Most HEIs, however, had yet to assess outcomes in this area and did not report any evidence of PER-led, or linked promotions. Indeed, one Catalyst’s evaluation report suggested that despite best efforts to effect change at structural level, many staff were still unaware of the
inclusion of public engagement in promotion criteria. This evaluation found that some staff displayed scepticism as to whether such changes would be implemented by their managers and peers.

5.4. PER award schemes

Seven of the eight Catalyst projects had either established their own award schemes for recognising excellence in PER, or had ‘piggy-backed’ on an existing award scheme, for example by adding a new category related to public engagement. More details of how these were set up are given in Catalysts’ final reports. A summary of the outcomes of these awards schemes is given below:

- University of Aberdeen – the Principal's Prize for public engagement with research was established in 2013 and 17 awards have been made to date. The 2013 winner went onto receive further recognition for his engaged research through a successful Scottish Crucible application in 2014 which focused on the importance of public engagement in a research career.

- University of Bath - The Vice Chancellor’s Staff Award and the Postgraduate Prize for Public Engagement with Research were set up in 2014. These awards are intended to raise the profile and quality of public engagement, demonstrate the university’s commitment to public engagement, and inform the PEU about researchers’ perceptions of public engagement. One award in each category (staff and postgraduate) is made each year. In 2014, 11 applications were received, rising to 14 in 2015.

- University of Exeter – the existing University of Exeter Impact Awards now has the new category for ‘Outstanding Public Engagement’.

- UCL Institute of Education – the Director’s Award for Public Engagement with Research was set up in 2013. In 2014 the prize was awarded to the Centre for Research into Autism and Education.

- University of Nottingham – the Vice Chancellor’s Award supports excellent public engagement activity.

- Open University – the Engaging Research Award Scheme ran in 2014 and 2015 and was specifically set up to recognise and reward excellence in engaged research. The scheme received nearly 40 entries and 16 projects were recognised, with nine winning and seven highly commended. An equivalent scheme to recognise and reward excellence in planning for and generating impact from research will run from 2016 onwards. The OU Catalyst's final report highlighted a number of additional outcomes of the scheme including:
  - Three of the 2013-14 winners went on to apply to the NCCPE’s Engage Competition.
  - All applicants received detailed feedback and two of the unsuccessful applications to the 2013-14 scheme subsequently used this feedback to re-apply to the 2014-15 scheme - both received awards.
There was significant publicity for all winning entries and five of the seven winners from the 2014 scheme presented their work at an engaging research seminar where the 2015 scheme was launched.

Three of the 2014 winners wrote about their work on the Engaging Research Blog and two returned as judges for the 2015 competition.

- Queen Mary University of London – Public Engagement awards are open to all staff and students and are held annually through a nomination round and a celebration event attended by around 100 people. Three celebration events have been held so far with six awards made for excellence in public engagement and enterprise. Activity in public engagement can also enable professional staff to achieve a GEM (Going the Extra Mile) award.

5.5. Summary

All eight Catalyst projects gave examples of the ways in which their input had helped bring about changes to the recognition and reward of researchers. These included changes to appraisal and performance review processes, job descriptions, promotion criteria and workload management. Between them, two HEIs provided evidence of four PER-led promotions to Professor during the timescale of their Catalyst projects.

Some Catalysts had set up processes for celebrating public engagement through their own awards schemes, or through working together with existing awards to include a category for recognising excellence in PER.
6. Encouraging and supporting staff to do public engagement work

RCUK’s call document specified that Catalyst funding should be used to encourage and support staff to become involved in public engagement activities, by building capacity through professional development, creating networks, partnership working and creation of resources. The NCCPE explains that institutional support and co-ordination is important since it can provide a focal point for sharing expertise, bring people together to learn, broker and support partnerships and provide easy-to-access entry points, such as university-wide events or festivals. One of the Concordat’s four key principles is that researchers should be “enabled to participate in public engagement activities through appropriate training, support and opportunities”.

The eight Catalyst projects developed their own distinctive approaches to delivering support for PER in their HEIs. This Chapter synthesises evidence about the processes and outcomes of the different components of these approaches, which included:

- Supporting funding applications and plans for research projects.
- Providing training and opportunities for professional development.
- Seed funding or grants schemes.
- Providing and sign-posting PER platforms and opportunities.
- Developing PER resources.

6.1. Support with funding applications and plans for research projects

Details of how the Catalysts had offered practical input to the development of funding applications was covered above in section 4.1. To summarise:

- Most Catalyst projects offered tailored, one-to-one support with grant applications (including ‘pathways to impact’ statements).
- Some provided other forms of application support via group workshops, master classes, case studies and good practice guidance materials or toolkits.
- One university had developed a Public Research Interest Group which provided lay expertise in reviewing research proposals from around 50 public members.
- Four HEIs also helped researchers to provide systematic evidence of their engagement activities, for example through impact statements for the REF, submissions to the RCUK Research Outcomes System or ResearchFish, and other forms of formal feedback on the outcomes and impact of PER.
- All of the Catalyst projects had found ways to offer input and guidance on public engagement throughout the research process, from agenda setting, to designing...
methodologies and forms of dissemination that enabled the participation of different people, communities and groups.

6.2. Providing training and professional development opportunities

The NCCPE points out that quality public engagement, which brings mutual benefits for universities and the public, needs skills and expertise. Opportunities for learning, both formally and informally, are therefore an essential part of providing a supportive environment for developing a culture of engaged research. The Catalyst projects offered a vast array of training and professional development opportunities, including:

- Mentoring and one-to-one training/professional development.
- PER-specific training and professional development programmes.
- Integrating PER training to other professional development programmes.
- Input on PER to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.
- Workshops and other one-off learning opportunities.

Some (but not all) of the Catalysts detailed the numbers of people who had benefitted from the training and professional development opportunities they had offered during the lifetime of the project, indicating that at least 5,300 individuals (researchers, students, professional support staff) had taken part in informal and formal learning as a result of the Catalysts programme. However, this figure is likely to be a gross underestimate of the real numbers of people who benefitted, since not all Catalyst teams were able to provide full or accurate data on numbers of people reached.

Mentoring and one-to-one training/professional development

All eight of the Catalysts were able to provide one-to-one training, professional development, or mentoring on PER, for interested individuals or staff groups. Various methods of doing so were cited, including ‘just in time training’, advice surgeries, mentoring by public engagement champions and cohort advice. This approach to training could be tailored to researchers’ needs and interests and offered at the stage where it would be most useful to their work. The popularity of a one-to-one approach to training was summed up in one Catalyst’s final report as follows:

“We found that offering one-to-one coaching sessions to academics was more successful than formal training... An informal meeting helped them with their core task, whereas formal staff development sessions pulled them away from their core tasks and may not be aligned with an opportunity to apply and consolidate their learning. Allowing learners to access new knowledge and skills quickly in order to complete their immediate work is key.”

32 http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/planning-change/learning

33 For example, the Open University’s online seminar series (see page 41) generated 14,500 hits, but it is not clear how many individual, new users this total represented so the figure is not included in the outcome data given above.
Some Catalyst projects had developed systems to record their team’s activity and interactions with researchers and cited some of the outcome data from these. For example, the Catalyst-funded PERU (University of Aberdeen) recorded 450 academic interactions over the middle 18 months of the Catalyst project. At the Open University, the Catalyst team between them provided training and professional development opportunities for more than 1,100 academic researchers through around 60 interventions over the lifetime of the project.

**PER-specific training and professional development programmes**

Four HEIs chose to offer PER-specific training and professional development opportunities. Like one-to-one training, this approach enabled a sustained focus on public engagement for those with a particular need and interest, but through a more scheduled timing and format.

For example, the University of Aberdeen established a core programme of workshops and training modules in social media, network building, communications, talking with the media, public engagement principles and practice, and grant writing. The University of Nottingham was developing a ‘public engagement driving licence’, targeted at all staff, including non-academic staff with ‘public engagement with research’ responsibilities. Pilot sessions included: best practice in engagement, organising an engagement event, communicating with different publics, identifying publics, entertaining an audience, involving the public in your research, working with schools. For the Open University, a research seminar series, with live and archive webcasts (the latter generating more than 14,500 hits) provided a means of offering professional development opportunities.

The University of Sheffield set up a Masterclass Programme, aimed at all staff, which offers support and training on different areas of public engagement development. The Sheffield Catalyst’s final report states that since their inception, Masterclasses have been attended by 1,128 academics, researchers, postgraduate students and professional service staff who between them have attended 22 sessions. Masterclass events involve both internal and external speakers and the Public Engagement and Impact team gather feedback from each event. Internal speakers are often drawn from the University’s network of Public Engagement Champions, which includes individuals who have been recognised for the exemplary nature of their engagement activities.

**Integrating PER training to other professional development programmes**

Incorporating public engagement training into other forms of professional development offered an additional route for integrating PER into core university business, as well as introducing public engagement to new audiences who might not otherwise have considered its relevance to their work and research. Six of the eight HEIs had integrated training on PER into other professional development programmes. These included induction programmes for staff and postgraduate students, and other compulsory courses for new academic staff. Some HEIs had programmed public engagement into institutional frameworks for academic professional development, some of which were internally or externally accredited. Others worked with research development staff to ensure PER was part of existing and future researcher development programmes. In some cases, this involved creating or contributing to modules or units run by other professional development staff. Several Catalyst-funded HEIs
had also ensured that PER was included in their leadership development programmes for senior managers and PIs.

**Input on PER to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes**

Six HEIs had included public engagement with research in undergraduate and postgraduate taught modules, many of which are also available to staff members. For example, The University of Nottingham’s Graduate School (for postgraduate students and researchers) offers a range of training opportunities to postgraduate students and researchers, including: the three-minute thesis, a science outreach programme, writing a press release, engaging with journalists and being an engaging researcher. During the Catalysts programme, 614 postgraduate researchers took part in these sessions. Similarly, the UCL Institute of Education offered free places for seven staff on its online MSc module in ‘Participative Research and Policy’.

Queen Mary University of London’s CPE runs a credit bearing module, through the Doctoral School, on public engagement which contributes to Media, Arts and Technology students’ final portfolios. PER has also been integrated into teaching at the Institute of Dentistry where students are now expected to include an element of volunteering as part of their undergraduate first year. Members of staff are permitted to undertake these modules as part of their academic practice qualifications and many have done so to date. The University of Bath’s PEU helped with the development of a new undergraduate module on communicating physics for first year Physics students, since repeated for second and third years and now being adapted for third year Chemistry and Pharmacy, and Pharmacology students.

The Open University’s PER Catalyst team secured funding (with the University of Birmingham) to provide three week-long training courses for 30 NERC-funded postgraduate researchers, which focused on developing skills in research engagement and communication.

Although not yet implemented, one other HEI was planning to offer two short sessions to doctoral students enrolled for the 2015/16 academic year. The sessions are planned to be run by a university academic alongside the head of research at a national voluntary sector organisation and will offer perspectives on research from inside and outside academia.

**Workshops and other one-off learning opportunities**

In addition to training courses and programmed teaching, several of the Catalyst projects offered one-off learning opportunities such as ad-hoc workshops or bespoke training for groups or departments. It was difficult to find clear information in project documentation about the extent to which these were offered across the HEIs, but the following examples give a flavour of some of the approaches that were taken:

- University of Bath – the PEU has offered 18 ad-hoc and bespoke workshops for department or research groups, reaching 379 people.
- University of Exeter – the Catalyst project manager has created bespoke training workshops where requested by department or colleges.
• UCL Institute of Education – the Catalyst team offered a series of one-hour training sessions, focusing on ‘pathways to impact’, to seven small groups of researchers in their centres, reaching 52 people in total.

• Queen Mary University London - CPE staff have developed bespoke training plans for subject-specific activities.

Several Catalysts made the point that offering a range of training and professional development options is essential for meeting the diversity of needs and interests of university staff. As one HEI put it:

“There is a need for multiple fora for learning (both within and across discipline, subject and professional groups of researchers) and scope for learning both face to face and online, even when researchers work within the same campus. This flexibility will allow participants to choose events or resources to suit their preferences for time and style of learning.”

Similarly, the importance of how training is framed and the impact that this can have on interest and take-up by staff, was also highlighted by another Catalyst project:

“Is it training? Is it a masterclass? Is it advanced training? Is it professional development? The subliminal impacts of a name cannot be underestimated. They play a crucial part in whether people even read the course synopsis! Once framed correctly for the right audience, we found that cohort-based, practical workshops were the best received of our courses, and where there were obvious routes to follow-up and put ideas into practice beyond the course.”

Outcomes of providing training and professional development opportunities

Quantitative outcomes of providing training and professional development opportunities have already been cited above and suggest that at least 5,300 individuals (researchers, students, professional support staff) had taken part in informal and formal learning as a result of the Catalysts programme.

Additional outcome evidence of increased demand for training was provided by some HEIs. For example, the University of Aberdeen reported an increase in the number of researchers taking part in training from 90 during the period 2010 to 2012, to 571 between 2012 and 2015. This was coupled with an increase in the number of courses available to researchers, from two per year before the project, to around nine per year by the end of the project. Similarly, The Sheffield Catalyst team noted a “real appetite from our colleagues to learn more about PE”:

the original target was to recruit 600 people to attend Masterclasses over the three years of the project, whereas over 678 people attended the first 11 Masterclasses, with more events planned.

A few Catalysts reported that feedback on their training and development opportunities was consistently high and that in particular these opportunities were leading to positive outcomes for the career enhancement of early-career researchers.
“We have a vibrant programme of development workshops linked to tangible outputs for evidencing those skills. This is enhancing CVs and allowing for better career progression within the University and for those PGRs and ECRs who will progress to other employment routes. We have many examples of researchers attending workshops and then going on to undertake engagement activities from taking part in national competitions (and reaching the UK finals) to developing engagement events that engage end users of research.”

6.3. Seed funding or grants schemes

Seven of the eight Catalyst projects had established seed funding or grants schemes to support, explore and develop aspects of PER. Details of the different schemes, as set out in the Catalysts’ final reports, are given below.

- University of Aberdeen – the Enabling Fund for Public Engagement supported four projects, leading to a series of documented case studies now posted on their website.

- University of Bath – the Seed Fund Scheme was set up by the PEU in 2014 and has, to date funded 18 projects to a total sum or £28,300. Grant holders were required to conduct some evaluation with their public group to evidence the impact of the engagement activity and understand how to improve it. These end-of-project reports were used to create case studies which are available online.

- University of Exeter – three rounds of the Catalyst Seed Fund were run by the Catalyst team between 2013 and 2015. Twenty-six awards of up to £5,000 each were made in total. All seed fund holders were required to complete an end of award report, the results of which formed the basis for a number of case studies to share best practice.

- University of Nottingham – the Partnership Fund offered grants of up to £500 each year, for three years, to enable and support public engagement activity. The Fund was advertised internally and externally through the Nottingham Council for Voluntary Services. There were 81 applications in all, 57 internal (of which 45 were funded) and 24 external (14 were funded).

- Open University – the Seed Funding Scheme was introduced to share different approaches to the generation and systematic collection of evidence of the impacts from engaged research. The scheme was a one-off and funded three projects to explore and document the impacts of engaged research through PER activities and producing end of award reports for publication online.

- Queen Mary University London – the Centre for Public Engagement’s funding rounds offered small grants of up to £1,000 each month and large grants of up to £50,000 each year, to enable staff to engage the public with the university as a place of teaching and research as well as to make Queen Mary accessible to the community around it. Successful bids were expected to submit a short report upon completion of the project. The funding rounds provided £108,625 to eight large projects and £13,196 to 17 small projects. The small awards scheme is still running, but the large awards have now closed.
University of Sheffield – The University’s Festival of the Mind (held in 2012 and 2014) was preceded by a networking event – the Ideas Bazaar – whose purpose was to bring together academic and external partners to meet, exchange ideas and apply for funding to run a Festival event. Two Ideas Bazaars were held during the Catalyst funding period (2011 and 2013). Over 400 people attended the 2011 Ideas Bazaar; 93 applications were made for collaborative projects, of which 40 were funded.

The outcome evidence above suggests that at least 175 additional public engagement projects were funded and supported as a result of the Catalysts programme. Additional outcomes noted by Catalysts included:

- Seed funding or other small grants enable staff to prioritise their public engagement project over other demands on their time.
- Seed funds often have an element of evaluation and intelligence gathering which can be used to inform practice and offer information to other researchers (for example through the publication of case studies).
- Seed funded projects, as examples of best practice in action, can enable both the recipients and those involved in judging and supporting projects to develop their ideas of what good quality engagement looks like and how it can be further improved.
- Seeding new projects can create new relationships with new groups of publics and subsequently lead to new and increased volume of PER work (as the example below shows).

The University of Bath’s final report outlined a huge range of significant outcomes (some of which are italicised below) as a result of one seed funded project entitled ‘Art of the Brain’. This was a joint project between an artist and a researcher from the Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology. The resulting public exhibition and accompanying workshops raised awareness of the university’s neuroscience and neuropharmacology research and provided researchers in the department with opportunities for their first experience of public engagement. The exhibition and workshops also provided a forum for networking and the development of new relationships between researchers and publics: one researcher met the lead worker from local dugs and homelessness charity and as a result of this encounter the researcher wrote an article on his research for the charity’s newsletter. The charity is now contributing to real life case studies for teaching about addiction. The seed funding also led to new and increased volume of PER work for the Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology: the artist was already working with a group of homeless people exploring mental health issues through the art collection at Bath’s Holbourne Museum. He involved another researcher from the Department in this project and the resulting artworks were hung in the Museum as part of a local arts festival Fringe Arts Bath.

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34 A full description of the outcomes and outputs of the engagement work undertaken by the Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology can be found in the University of Bath Catalyst project’s final report: http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/scisoc/Engaged360BathCatalystFinalReport.pdf/
6.4. Providing and sign-posting PER platforms and opportunities

Evidence from the Catalysts showed that projects provided access to PER platforms and opportunities in three main ways:

- By highlighting existing opportunities and platforms, such as local initiatives or national festivals.
- By proactively working with national and regional festival organisers to ensure their HEI’s involvement in these initiatives.
- By creating new platforms and opportunities for public engagement activities.

The Catalysts’ reports described a myriad of activity in this area, with many case studies of illustrative examples, some of which demonstrated the potential for engagement activities to be a mutually beneficial two-way dialogue between researchers and publics. Annex C lists the platforms and opportunities offered or highlighted by each of the Catalysts during the lifetime of their projects and two example approaches, including their outcomes, are summarised below.

The Catalyst-funded PERU at Aberdeen University has found numerous ways to provide and sign-post PER opportunities for staff. Its monthly e-zine highlights current opportunities for engagement, and the unit’s staff established Aberdeen as a regional hub for the ESRC’s Festival of Social Sciences and the AHRC-funded Being Human Festival, both of which are held annually. British Science Week in Aberdeen is currently co-led by the PERU and invites 20 organisations each year to feature in the programme. Partnerships with other universities have also helped create new opportunities such as researcher representation at the Glasgow Science Festival, and involvement in a Pan-Scotland public engagement project - European Researchers’ Night (Explorathon). The latter was secured by the PERU team working with the Universities of Strathclyde, Glasgow and Edinburgh, with wider partnership involving upward of 30 bodies. In addition, the PERU has itself created a number of new PER platforms for staff including:

- University of Aberdeen May Festival
- Community cafe programme
- Annual Lecture Series
- ‘Meet the Researcher’ events held regularly throughout year.

The Aberdeen Catalyst final report states that prior to RCUK funding, the events programme at Aberdeen largely ran independently of academic interests or strategies. However, since the award, the programme has been transformed to be an infrastructure for enabling academics to put their PER skills and ideas into practice. The report suggest that this outcome is an essential part of the culture change journey as it offers flexible and accessible entry routes which are often important first steps into the public engagement environment for some academics, particularly early career researchers.

Bath University’s Public Engagement Unit has provided opportunities for researchers to ‘plug into’ public engagement events, both in terms of existing regional and national festivals (ESRC
Festival of Social Science, Being Human, Royal Society Summer School) and new, PEU-led platforms. Recent platforms have included:

- Images of Research - a public exhibition held in Bath, where researchers explained their work using just an image and short description.
- Pint of Science - an annual festival where researchers give short, informal talks in pubs, organised by the Public Engagement Forum.
- Bath Inspires - a workshop to co-create platforms for public engagement between researchers and community groups.

For the University of Bath, a key outcome of providing a range of easily accessible platforms is that these opportunities have enabled researchers involved in PER training to get involved promptly and consolidate their learning.

Other outcomes noted by Catalysts included an increase in the number of PER platforms and opportunities available, increased public participation, more awareness of the existence of these platforms amongst staff, and increased numbers of staff taking part. For example, baseline and end-of-project data from both Bath and Sheffield’s Catalyst projects indicated that public attendance, staff awareness and staff involvement in public engagement platforms had increased between 2013 and 2015.

The University of Sheffield’s Catalyst team collected evaluation data from almost all of the many new platforms established as a result of the project. This included details of number of staff and volunteers involved in each platform or event; visitor numbers; website visits and Twitter followers; media coverage; and details of a range of other outcomes for researchers and publics taking part in the events, including:

- Enjoyment of the public engagement experience.
- Gaining new skills from taking part.
- Learning something new.
- Enabling researchers to think about their research in new and different ways.
- New relationships and enriched interaction between researchers, partners and other public groups.
- New opportunities for collaborative work and for undertaking more public engagement with research.

For example, Sheffield’s Doc/Fest platform enabled academics to pitch a research idea to a panel of documentary makers in front of an audience. Outcomes of this platform included three academics being asked to write a statement or produce a show-reel; two pitching their idea to TV or film studios; one being asked to appear as an expert on a BBC documentary; and another acting as advisor on the BBC Wolf Hall series. The academics commented that they enjoyed the creativity of this form of engagement and that it helped them to think about their research in a different way. Contacts established in the 2012 Doc/Fest resulted in the award of £40,000 as part of a larger research grant to part fund a documentary on Margaret Thatcher which was then co-produced with an award winning production company and shown at Doc/Fest 2015.
6.5. Developing PER resources

All of the eight Catalyst projects developed resources for raising awareness of PER and sharing good practice. Annex D summarises the PER-related resources created and developed across the Catalysts programme.

For most of the projects, the main resource created was their website or web pages which hosted information and news items about the PER support they offered, training, funding and networking opportunities and other key elements of their model. Some websites also included archives of newsletters and blogs, links to external publications and toolkits, or to resources created by the Catalyst team. Project final reports (see Annex D) are also important and informative outputs and should be read in conjunction with this review for more detail of each Catalyst’s approach to embedding PER within their host institution.

Outcomes of developing PER resources were noted by a few Catalyst projects in their final and evaluation reports and included:

- PER-related outputs play an important role as learning tools for other researchers and the wider public engagement community.
- Outputs help to communicate clear messages about the value and purpose of PER and the benefits it can bring for researchers.
- Outputs can help to raise the profile of PER and increase awareness of the diversity of activities happening across institutions.
- The act of writing and producing a PER-related output provides an opportunity for conscious reflection about the process and impact of the work, with potential for improving the quality and reach of current practice.

“It was important for us to have examples of [our] public engagement with research for researchers to consider and learn from; to recognise the work of those being featured in the case studies; and to create a visible portfolio of engaged research. However, we had not anticipated how important the process of collecting the case study material would be for the researchers themselves. For many of those we worked with, this was the first time they had thought reflectively about their public engagement with research skills and practice as a conscious process, leading to significant realisations for the individuals, including how they could be more strategic, widen their reach to other audiences or other people they could work with within the institution.”

6.6. Summary

All of the eight Catalyst projects had found numerous ways to encourage and support staff to do engaged research. Each of the host HEIs had developed their own distinctive approach to delivering support for PER, which included some or all of the following components:

- Supporting funding applications and plans for research projects.
- Providing training and opportunities for professional development.
• Seed funding or grants schemes, resulting in at least 174 additional public engagement projects being funded and supported as a result of the Catalysts programme.

• Providing and sign-posting PER platforms and opportunities.

• Developing PER resources.
7. Creating and contributing to networks supporting public engagement with research

RCUK’s call document stated that Catalyst funding should be used to support the development of internal and external networks. The first aim of the programme acknowledged the important role that networks can play in sharing good practice, celebrating work and contributing to a wider community supportive of public engagement. Networks ensure that staff and students feel supported and encouraged to engage with the public and are both aware of, and able to use, the expertise and best practice of others in the field. The NCCPE adds that effective networks and co-ordination can help to ensure that the quality of engagement activity is enhanced and can create ownership of engagement across the organisation, minimise duplication and stimulate new ideas

This Chapter examines evidence from Catalysts about the ways in which they:

- Created internal networks to share good practice, support staff and celebrate public engagement.
- Contributed to wider networks supportive of public engagement including the NCCPE, other recipient HEIs and the wider HE community.

7.1. Creating internal networks

All eight of the Catalyst projects had found ways to create internal networks to share good practice and discuss PER-related issues. There was a huge amount of variety and creativity in the range of approaches described by the HEIs in their reports, but mostly these fell into three categories:

- Online or email based internal PER networks.
- Internal PER networks that meet regularly for discussion and sharing of good practice and to host events or training.
- Internal PER networks for students.

Online or email based internal PER networks

Two HEIs set up online or email based networks to promote PER and share good practice. The University of Bath established a mailing list which comprises 346 researchers and professional service staff by the end of the project, compared with 64 members at the start of the Catalysts programme. Known as the Public Engagement Network, this email-based network updates its members with PER-related news and opportunities. The UCL Institute of Education’s Public Engagement Forum is an online discussion forum which was set up to share ideas about public engagement in research. Members are invited to post blogs or start discussion threads and by the end of the Catalyst project, the Forum had 65 members, including academics, professional staff such as library archivists, and postgraduate students.

35 http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/planning-change/support
Internal PER networks that meet regularly for discussion and sharing of best practice

Six Catalyst teams established internal networks as part of their funded activities and most of these continue to meet regularly for discussion, to share good practice and to host events or training. The approaches taken by different HEIs are described below.

- University of Aberdeen – the Research Staff Association was established by the Researcher Development Unit with a specific interest in public engagement through training and events.

- University of Bath - Public Engagement Conversations are short events on a Wednesday afternoon, three per semester, to discuss engagement-related issues and for individuals to share their experiences and top tips. Nine Conversations had been delivered by the end of the Catalyst project, with a total attendance of 200 researchers. Their delivery has involved input from 25 researchers across 12 departments alongside six contributors from professional service departments and seven contributors from external organisations. Bath also runs an annual event (Celebrating Engaged Research) which aims to raise the profile of high quality public engagement across the university, illustrate the range of PER activities being undertaken, and support networking.

- University of Exeter – the Impact and Engaged Research Network was launched in January 2015 to bring together research and professional services staff interested in engaged research. The Catalyst project manager co-leads the Network alongside the research impact manager. Since its inception the Network has hosted five events which have been attended by 175 staff. Topics for discussion have included: the first steps of engaging with a non-academic partner, using social media to engage non-academic audiences, working with the heritage sector, and opportunities for engaging with Parliament.

- UCL Institute of Education - Public Engagement Network meetings take place monthly at lunchtime to showcase, encourage and celebrate examples of public engagement in research. They provide opportunities for IOE staff and research partners in and outside of IOE to discuss their research engagement activities in a friendly, informal space. To date, 24 monthly meetings have been held, each attracting a different audience of up to 12 staff, external colleagues and visitors.

- University of Nottingham – the Engaged Engagers Forum was a one-off event to start the process of developing an internal community of practice. The Forum was arranged to bring together pro-active public engagers to share experiences, build networks, and explore best practice and support for public engagement. Direct email invitations were sent to over 150 staff identified as ‘active engagers’ with 43 attending the event itself.

- Queen Mary University of London - Topic Group Meetings can be pitched by staff or students, and topics covered so far have included Science Outreach, Collaborating with Artists, and Influencing Health Policy. The CPE facilitates the meetings and uses them to identify areas for future work or investment, but it believes that the strongest outcome of these meetings is not the action list, but the connections generated through shared interest. The CPE also runs other networking opportunities such as PE breakfasts and PE hang-outs which see about 50 people over the course of two hours drop-in.
Internal PER networks for students

Two Catalyst projects had helped to create public engagement networks aimed primarily at students. The University of Bath’s PEU set up a Public Engagement Forum for postgraduate research students. This Forum meets monthly to discuss theories associated with PER, hear from more senior researchers and deliver specific engagement initiatives such as Bath’s contribution to the Pint of Science Festival. The University of Exeter’s Postgraduate Network was developed by the Catalyst project team in partnership with one of the university’s Champions for Public Engagement, himself a PhD student. The Network has recently put together a proposal for including the public as members of PhD upgrade panels. This element of public engagement in a core research activity is currently being considered for piloting by two university departments.

7.2. Contributing to external networks

In the call document, RCUK highlighted the value of HEIs working with cultural and community partners and/or other HEIs to embed public engagement with research. Catalyst projects were asked, therefore, to consider how they would share learning and disseminate best practice with the NCCPE and others in the HE sector and those working in the public engagement field.

In their reports, the eight Catalyst projects talked about their experiences of:

- Offering advice to other HEIs.
- Speaking at events.
- Contributing to consultations.
- Sharing learning with the wider sector.
- Being part of the Catalyst network, facilitated and supported by the NCCPE.

Offering advice to other HEIs

All eight of the Catalyst projects had shared advice and learning with other HEIs, through personal visits, teaching engagements, invitations to speak at other HEIs’ seminars or conferences, or partnership working.

For example, members of staff from the PERU at Aberdeen University delivered PER training for staff and students at the University of St Andrews, acted as consultants to the University of Oxford’s RCUK Catalyst Seed Fund application, advised another Catalyst HEI on the development of its award scheme, and mentored other universities across Scotland on the role of PER in research. Similarly, the Public Engagement Unit at the University of Bath offered one-to-one advice to several universities, reached over 500 researchers through training and conference presentations and was involved, with the Exeter Catalyst team, in initiating a GW4\(^{36}\) public engagement group. The aim is for GW4 partners to develop a regional commitment to PER which is likely to focus on shared support for the professional development of researchers (for example through Centres for Doctoral Training) and the impact agenda. The Exeter Catalyst team has also acted as a mentor to Keele University to

\(^{36}\) http://gw4.ac.uk/

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share best practice and support colleagues at Keele to develop an integrated strategy for engaged research.

Examples from other HEIs included providing a panel member for another university’s public engagement awards, and the development of a PER network between four universities in the midlands and south east of England.

**Speaking at events**

Six of the eight HEIs provided information about the events their Catalyst staff had been involved with as speakers or presenters. These included a range of national and international meetings and conferences such as: the NCCPE’s Engage Conference; INVOLVE, the national conference for patient engagement; and the ARMA Good Practice Exchange.

**Contributing to consultations**

Three of the Catalyst project teams had been involved in contributing to external consultations relating to aspects of public engagement in research, including for example the development of guidance for the recently launched RCUK Catalyst Seed Fund. One of these (Open University) had carried out a very large body of consultation and review work for many national organisations (including HEFCE, BIS, NCCPE and others) as part of their funded Catalyst project.

**Sharing learning across the wider sector**

All eight of the Catalyst projects had found ways to share learning about PER more widely across the sector and outside of HEIs. These included creating resources and producing a final report detailing their project work (see Annex D); taking part in quarterly NCCPE Catalysts network meetings and contributing to collective outputs (e.g. Change Agent role description; EDGE tool redevelopment); advising other non-HE organisations; and helping to create and extend external networks and partnerships. For example, staff from the University of Bath’s PEU advised the British Ecological Society and Royal Society of Chemistry on embedding PER. They are also currently exploring with the At-Bristol science centre how it can build up relationships with universities. One of the PEU team is also now a tutor on the NCCPE’s recently launched Public Engagement Academy.

Several of the Catalyst projects had worked with the NCCPE to develop a new open access journal about public engagement – ‘Research for All: Universities and Society’. The journal aims to raise the quality of engaged research by stimulating discussion about the effectiveness of public engagement with researchers, research outcomes and processes. The journal is co-sponsored by the UCL Institute of Education and the NCCPE, which allows open access to all articles without charge to either authors or readers. The journal is published by IOE Press and

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37 Association of Research Managers and Administrators
36 [http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/pe/embedding/](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/pe/embedding/)
the first issue will appear in 2016. One Catalyst described the important role that the NCCPE played in brokering the development of this journal as follows:

“Support from the NCCPE has facilitated a collaborative approach to developing the journal in discussion with other universities and community partners, as well as the integration of the journal with the NCCPE’s website and programme of activities.”

All of the Catalysts created external partnerships with publics, communities, organisations and industry. In some cases, Catalyst teams also helped to create and extend these partnerships, by acting as a broker between external organisations. For example, the CPE at Queen Mary University of London has helped to connect People’s Palace Projects to a variety of international stakeholders to relay their practice. The team have also supported local community lunches where community groups from around Tower Hamlets can share practice and news. Similarly, the PEI team at Sheffield has worked with over 150 cultural and creative partners as part of the Festival of the Mind. Through its range of platforms for public engagement, the Catalyst-funded PEI team helped to strengthen links between these partners and other major local organisations such as Sheffield City Council and Museums Sheffield.

**Being part of the Catalysts Programme network, facilitated and supported by the NCCPE**

The NCCPE was funded to provide support and coordination, across the Catalysts programme as a whole, and to each of the eight participating HEIs. This role included ensuring Catalyst projects learnt from each other and that learning was shared with the wider sector. Key aspects of the support from NCCPE included: sharing resources and expertise; providing advice, information and feedback; facilitating quarterly network meetings and a mailing list.

The Catalyst HEIs were not specifically asked to comment on the support from the NCCPE in their reports to RCUK, as the NCCPE has independent evaluators in place, so evidence relating to their experience of this support is relatively limited. Nonetheless, where evidence exists, it suggests that:

- HEIs were drawing heavily on NCCPE resources to support the development and implementation of PER within their institutions – these included use of the EDGE tool, adopting the NCCPE’s definition of public engagement, adapting NCCPE training materials, and using/referencing/linking to other resources available on the NCCPE website. In addition, seven of the eight HEIs had signed up to the NCCPE’s Manifesto for public engagement by the end of the Catalysts programme.

- HEIs greatly appreciated the active role played by the NCCPE in providing direct advice, mentoring and support for networking between the Catalysts and with other organisations. Several HEIs gave examples of how the NCCPE had helped them to make links and develop good working relationships with other organisations (including other Catalyst HEIs), to the benefit of their PER work.

- Network meetings were highly valued as opportunities for collaborating, sharing best practice and learning from each other about embedding public engagement (see below for more details).
All of the Catalyst project teams were asked to take part in the quarterly network meetings, facilitated by the NCCPE. These provided HEIs with opportunities for sharing ideas and learning and for regular engagement with each other and with the NCCPE team both during and between meetings.

“This has been a critical relationship. The Catalyst institutions have been candid, thoughtful and willing to share experiences, both positive and negative. The involvement of the NCCPE has been crucial to sharing learning from the Beacons as well as other institutions who are engaging with this agenda. The NCCPE facilitated the between-Catalyst learning through the quarterly meetings and the mailing list. Conversations between Catalysts continue independently between meetings.”

Some Catalysts gave examples of the ways in which involvement in these meetings and the wider network as a whole, had influenced and supported the development of key aspects of their PER activities.

“The most important partnership was with the NCCPE and Catalyst teams at the seven other universities. Regular meetings convened as part of the national project encouraged exchange of ideas and opportunities to work together on various initiatives. There was a direct influence on: the design of the Director’s Award for Excellence in Public Engagement with research; the role of Research and Consultancy Services in sustaining support for public engagement following the Catalyst project; and the development of the open access journal Research for All: Universities and Society.”

Several Catalysts expressed their hope and intention that the network created through the programme would continue to flourish as a potential source of expertise and best practice.

“Being able to share individual and collective progress, to learn from one another and to support each other through the culture change journey was vital. Regular meetings, coordinated by the NCCPE, allowed all Catalyst projects to have the space to take stock and reflect on progress as well as share stories with those in a similar situation as ourselves. The network provided a safe, nurturing, problem solving environment which [our] Catalyst team found to be of immense value and one that [we] will endeavour to continue to be an active member of post-RCUK funding.”

7.3. Outcomes of creating and contributing to internal and external networks

A number of outcomes of Catalyst-funded HEIs’ networking activities have been described above. These outcomes can be summarised as follows:

- Increased awareness of and interest in public engagement within host HEIs, as evidenced by the growth in numbers of network members over the lifetime of the Catalysts programme.
- Providing opportunities for sharing learning and good practice amongst a wider community supportive of public engagement – for example, through input to the new RCUK Catalyst Seed Fund scheme, or by working with the GW4 partners to develop a south west regional commitment to PER.
• Providing opportunities to showcase and celebrate examples of PER in practice, thereby ensuring that staff and students feel supported and encouraged.

• Helping to generate new connections and strengthen existing relationships with academics and publics.

• Offering a forum for identifying areas for future work or investment thus helping to ensure on-going enhancement of the quality of engagement activity.

• Creating a national network of expertise and best practice through on-going communication between Catalysts projects and the NCCPE.

7.4. Summary

The Catalyst projects provided evidence about how they had shared learning and disseminated best practice in PER through:

• Creating internal networks for staff and students, via email or online, or by holding regular meetings for discussion and to host events or training sessions

• Contributing to external networks by offering advice to other HEIs, speaking at national and regional events, contributing to consultations, sharing learning with the wider sector and being part of the Catalyst network, facilitated and supported by the NCCPE.
8. Developing best practice in public engagement with research

The last main aim of the Catalysts programme was to build on experience from the Beacons and other HEIs (including grant holders) to develop best practice that recognises the two-way nature of public engagement with research. In Chapter 3, the review examined how some of the Catalyst projects had helped their host HEIs to articulate a shared understanding of public engagement. We considered the extent to which this shared understanding, where it existed, reflected best practice in public engagement as a mutually beneficial dialogue between researchers and publics, with opportunities for interaction throughout the research process. Chapter 4 went on to explain how all eight of the Catalyst teams had offered input and guidance to researchers on how to embed public engagement activities throughout the research life cycle, from devising research questions, to designing dissemination strategies that enabled public participation. Chapters 5 to 8 described the plethora of other forms of support offered by the Catalyst projects to encourage and equip researchers to undertake public engagement with research.

An analysis of the case studies and practice examples cited in project reports highlighted that all eight of the Catalyst projects had supported PER activities in practice that reflected researchers’ understanding of the benefits of engaged research as a mutually beneficial dialogue with the potential to be embedded at different stages of the research process. Some projects provided details of one best practice activity, whilst others cited several, so it is not possible to gauge the extent to which best practice had been fully adopted and embedded by staff within the Catalyst HEIs. Nonetheless, the examples stand as strong evidence for embedded PER in practice and eight of these (taken directly from project reports) are set out in 8.1 below.

8.1. Best practice in public engagement with research: examples from project final reports

**University of Aberdeen**

Catalyst funding was used to support the development of a Public Research Interest Group with a remit to provide lay expertise in reviewing research proposals. Since its inception in 2014, the group has provided input to around 15 funding applications, and now has more than 50 public members.

**University of Bath**

The Bath Inspires event held in September 2014 provided an opportunity for members of the local community to co-create public engagement platforms alongside researchers from the University. Bath researchers were keen to work with the local community to identify platforms that suited them and their needs rather than to take a top-down approach.

The day-long event took place in a pub in central Bath and comprised two parts: (1) an opportunity to network and to clarify the aims of the day and the resources available; and (2) an open space for ideas generation, followed by a pitching of ideas and time to work up outline project plans. Using
networks and contacts developed through the first two years of the Engaged360@Bath project, the Catalyst team at the PEU secured the attendance of 11 different local community organisations including: Bath & NE Somerset Council, Bath Film Festival, Creative Bath, and Bath Royal Literary & Scientific Institution. Following the event, project teams submitted proposals for funding. Four were received, with three funded £3,000 each. Projects spanned a variety of research areas and community partners.

University of Exeter

The University of the Third Age (U3A) is a nationwide lifelong learning movement aimed at those who are semi or fully retired. Over the last three years the Exeter Catalyst project has built strong links with Exeter U3A, which has over 400 members. Since the inception of the Catalyst, attitudes from some U3A members have been transformed from those who were sceptical about going up to the university campus and getting involved in its activities, to now being open and enthusiastic about it and active champions of the institution. U3A have been able to build their own network of contacts and opportunities as a result of the link with the Exeter Catalyst. This has enabled them to become fully embedded and supported within the institution through a number of different means such as proposal workshops, seminars and student presentations. U3A members in Exeter have become much more positive about the possibility of co-creating research with University partners, and it is anticipated that this aim will be a key element of a Memorandum of Understanding between the University and Exeter U3A.

Key to this attitudinal change has been the variety of opportunities for members to collaborate on, or find out about, research. Contacts have been made with many departments of the university, for example, Classics and Ancient History, Politics, the Exeter Medical School, the Mood Disorders Centre and the Department of Modern Languages. Exeter U3A Members have taken part in grant proposal workshops, attended research seminars and PhD presentations and have met with international students as part of a series of ‘family classes’. They have representation as lay members on two committees; the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Group and the Social Science and International Studies Research Ethics Committee. The relationship is seen to be mutually beneficial and academic staff have been very pleased to work with such a stimulating and interested group of people.

Institute of Education

The IOE Catalyst team have recently worked with staff at the Centre for Research into Autism and Education, which was awarded the Director’s prize for excellence in public engagement in 2015. The Centre (CRAE) has a long-standing interest in consultation work and participatory research with autistic people, their families, practitioners and researchers. In December 2014, CRAE organised an event, Making Decisions, Shaping Your Lives: Improving Participation for Autistic People and their Families to enable participants to speak about how they influence (or not) the decisions affecting their lives. This event supported CRAE to identify ways in which their stakeholders can have a greater influence on research.

University of Nottingham

Over a four-week period in February 2015, a Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) was delivered via the Futurelearn Platform with over 9,000 learners from 90 countries being involved with research
into public perceptions of shale gas extraction. In addition to learning about shale gas, part of the course involved learners undertaking research on public perceptions of shale gas in their local area and amongst their networks. Their findings were then fed in to the online discussions and debates and as such these individuals went from being passive consumers of research knowledge to active participants in the production of knowledge. Although this approach needs further development and refinement it is clear that engaging the public in research via MOOCs and other online fora has significant potential. Participants were aged from 13 to 92 and made nearly 28,000 comments. The feedback on this course indicated that people felt they had been given an opportunity to learn but also to feed into the research and debates on the subject.

The Open University

Participation Now is an accessible, indexed, searchable and expanding collection of 150 contemporary examples of participatory public engagement. Participation Now also offers a space for researchers and practitioners to network and debate the possibilities and difficulties associated with different forms of emerging practice and opportunities for further innovation. Thirty-five blog-style contributions have been published and people are invited to contribute blogs and posts to support and signal their engagement.

Queen Mary University London

In 2014 QMUL embarked on a significant set of investments in the life sciences. The vision was to develop research and teaching interests in the life sciences, whilst building strong public engagement and investment into this work. The Centre for Public Engagement has been working with the Life Sciences Initiative (LSI) team since the outset to push for a truly engaged approach and the consequences have been varied.

Public engagement is now present in all of the associated documentation, press work and website. The public is considered in the plans for new buildings, from developing communication spaces like galleries and theatres, to consideration of how to lay out the patient and participant waiting rooms, to discussions around local signage and internet provisions. The wider community is considered within the university’s conversations with planning agencies and the council.

PER has also been built into the associated grant applications. East London Genes and Health (ELGH), funded by MRC and the Wellcome Trust, has a large-scale programme of patient involvement included from the outset, supported by outreach programmes such as A Mummy for Melissa. The public are intrinsic to this study, but ELGH involves community awareness raising and relationship development activities in schools and community hubs, social media activity, and specialist cultural awareness training for staff and students who are collecting samples. In January 2015 QMUL received Wellcome Trust Institutional Strategic Support funds for the LSI, including top-up funds to enable the funding of all of the public engagement activities that had been outlined. This has enabled the appointment of a dedicated Community Engagement Officer with funds to seed collaborative and co-creational projects.
University of Sheffield

The range and variety of public engagement platforms offered by the Public Engagement and Impact team provide researchers at the University of Sheffield with a structured way to engage with external audiences and co-create research and engagement activity. The third Ideas Bazaar, held in September 2015, brought together academics and artists to talk creatively about research. Creative partnerships seeded at the Bazaar were invited to develop their ideas into collaborative projects to be showcased at the third Festival of the Mind in 2016. The PEI team is looking to fund a number of such projects which could be anything from a performance, talk, cultural event, public demonstration to an online initiative.

8.2. Outcomes of developing and supporting best practice in PER

The examples above, taken directly from Catalyst projects’ final reports, and others referenced throughout this report, provide compelling evidence that researchers within the eight Catalyst-funded HEIs are interpreting public engagement as a mutually beneficial dialogue between researchers and publics with the potential to be embedded at different stages of the research process. Further outcomes of developing and supporting this conception of best practice include:

- The breadth and variety of public groups engaged with has increased in the Catalyst HEIs – evaluation data from one project found that researchers are now engaging a wider range of groups in their work: in 2013 researchers were engaging mainly teachers and policy makers; in 2015 researchers were reaching out to a broader range of publics.

- The type of public engagement activities undertaken had broadened – several projects noted that staff were talking about and practising forms of engagement beyond dissemination of findings. For example, one Catalyst’s evaluation found that more staff were including lay partners on their research teams; and another HEI’s evaluation showed that staff were now talking more about two-way relationships being at heart of public engagement and had a broader sense of who the public might be.

- There was also evidence of some outcomes for the publics with whom the Catalysts had engaged - one evaluation noted that public feedback included greater awareness of the work and activities of a university; more understanding about how research helps society; and changes in attitudes towards the university and its role in city life. This Catalyst’s evaluation had included baseline and post-project interviews with eight public partners which also showed evidence of a growth in trust; more sense of sharing and discussion of ideas; improved knowledge of who to contact at the university and an appreciation of the value of co-creation of research, particularly for commercial partners.

- PER is now part of the research discourse at most HEIs – public engagement in research is now embedded within the day-to-day vocabulary of academic staff
seeking support for their funding applications, academic activity and personal development.

8.3. Summary

All eight of the Catalyst projects provided evidence of their support and development of examples of best practice in PER. In this context, best practice in PER is defined as a mutually beneficial dialogue between researchers and publics with the potential to be embedded at different stages of the research process. Some projects provided details of one activity which embodied this best practice approach, whilst others cited several, thus it is not possible to gauge the full extent to which best practice had been fully adopted and embedded by staff within the host HEIs. Nonetheless, the examples offered by the Catalyst projects stand as evidence for embedded PER in practice and show that all of the eight HEIs had addressed the second main aim of the Catalysts programme which was to “build on experience to develop best practice that recognises the two-way nature of public engagement with research”.
9. Culture change: embedded and sustainable?

RCUK’s call document stated that all proposals should focus on organisational development and effective change management to embed public engagement with research beyond the lifetime of the funding. All applicants were expected to demonstrate sustainability in their funded projects, so that further change could continue to take place beyond the funding period.

In order to understand the contribution made by the Catalysts programme, this review has so far considered:

- The activities undertaken by the eight HEIs to achieve the aims of the programme and the different approaches they each took to implementing these processes and outputs.
- The immediate and post-programme outcomes that were achieved through the Catalysts’ activities.

It now remains to consider whether there was evidence of any longer-term, deeper impact of the programme: that is, the extent to which these activities and outcomes were embedded and sustained by the Catalyst HEIs.

9.1. What has changed for the eight HEIs as a result of their involvement in the PER Catalysts programme?

Analysis of evidence from project reports highlighted the following types of changes (in terms of processes and outcomes) for the HEIs involved in the Catalysts programme:

- Strategic changes
- Operational changes
- Attitudinal changes
- Conceptual changes.

Strategic changes

Involvement in the Catalysts programme had helped HEIs to make a commitment to PER at institutional level, thereby giving public engagement a ‘strategic stamp of approval’. This report has already catalogued the raft of strategic changes instigated by the eight Catalyst HEIs. These included:

- Embedding a commitment to PER in corporate plans.
- Development of new, shared understandings of PER at institutional level and their definition and articulation in university-wide strategic documents.
- New institutional PER strategies, or inclusion of PER in other strategies and planning documents.
- Changes to formal governance arrangements to ensure institutional oversight of PER activities.
• Introduction of PER champions who helped to raise the profile of public engagement, formalised a visible commitment to PER and for some HEIs, increased the effectiveness of support available to researchers.

• On-going strategic, financial commitment to sustaining central PER support (and some PER activities) after the end of the funded Catalysts programme.

Operational changes

Evidence from the eight HEIs showed how their involvement in the Catalysts programme had enabled them to develop new operational structures, systems and resources for PER. These included:

• New structures which provide co-ordination and visibility for previously disparate PER activity – for some HEIs this involved setting up new, central PER units or teams; others used dispersed networks and/or senior level champions to facilitate the delivery of support for PER.

• Changes to elements of core research support - these included changes to ethical review, financial and administrative systems for supporting PER, job descriptions, performance and annual review process, promotion criteria, workload allocation; and changes to leadership development and professional development programmes to include PER.

• Evidence of outcomes of these changes to core research support, including four PER-led promotions to Professor during the timescale of the Catalysts programme.

• Increased practical support and new resources for PER, including:
  
o More tailored support to develop funding applications, draft ‘pathways to impact’ statements and to evidence PER activities and impact: resulting in PER-related support to at least 800 academic staff and input to at least 300 grant applications.

  o New input and guidance on including/embedding engagement activities into the whole research life-cycle, including newly developed online and printed PER resources.

  o The introduction of new awards schemes, seed funding, grants schemes, and networks to share good practice, support staff and celebrate public engagement: at least 174 additional public engagement projects have been funded and supported as a result of the Catalysts programme.

  o Increased learning opportunities including mentoring and one-to-one training/professional development (sometimes through the use of PER champions or advocates), integration of PER training into other professional development programmes, input on PER to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, workshops and other one-off training opportunities: at least 5,300 individuals (researchers, students, and professionals support staff) have taken part in informal and formal learning as a result of the Catalysts programme.

  o New and/or improved access to a range of PER platforms and opportunities, enabling researchers involved in PER training to get involved promptly and
consolidate their learning. Other outcomes included: enabling researchers to think about their research in new and different ways; new relationships and enriched interaction between researchers, partners and other public groups; and new opportunities for collaborative work and for undertaking more public engagement with research.

- New initiatives to trial and embed methods for measuring the quality and impact of PER activities – this was an area where HEIs were keen to develop their understanding in order to better inform PER practice and planning in the future.

### Attitudinal changes

The evidence for attitudinal changes was less easy to identify, but key outcomes noted by Catalysts’ final and evaluation reports included:

- More recognition of the value and expertise of the Catalyst team.
- Increased motivation and enthusiasm for PER – with staff now “being driven by enthusiasm rather than duty” and established networks that will remain in place to motivate staff beyond the lifetime of the Catalyst project.
- The recognition that public engagement adds value to a university’s core business - through the Catalysts programme, the funded HEIs had developed an understanding of public engagement as a way of delivering high quality research and teaching.
- More cross-university understanding of the role, importance and value of public engagement with research, particularly in terms of being a legitimate and valued component of research roles within HEIs.
- Increased recognition of the value of PER as a potential platform for career enhancement, through additional funding streams and new forms of career recognition.
- One Catalyst’s evaluation also provided evidence, through baseline and post-project interviews with eight public partners, of changes in public attitudes towards universities, and improved understanding of the work and activities of the host HEI.

### Conceptual changes

This report has already considered the ways in which the eight Catalyst projects had helped broaden, define and articulate new understandings of public engagement with research within their host HEIs, so bringing about conceptual changes at strategic and operational levels. There was no clear, empirical evidence (from research and evaluation) of the extent to which these conceptual changes were fully embedded into the thinking and practice of individual HEI staff. However, all eight of the Catalyst projects cited examples of staff practice that recognised the two-way nature of public engagement with research, from setting the agenda and defining research questions through to publication and dissemination of research findings.

Other evidence for conceptual changes included:

- Increased breadth and variety of PER undertaken by staff in the Catalyst HEIs.
• Wider understanding that including PER in grant applications makes bids stronger – several HEIs made the case that many of their successful proposals had received input and advice from Catalyst teams, particularly with preparing ‘pathways to impact’ statements and plans for embedding PER throughout the proposed research project.

• Inclusion of PER as part of the research discourse at most HEIs – public engagement in research is now embedded within the day-to-day vocabulary of academic staff seeking support for their funding applications, academic activity and personal development.

9.2. To what extent are these changes embedded?

The final report guidance from RCUK to the eight Catalyst HEIs encouraged them to reflect on how far they had come from their starting point, with reference to their position on the NCCPE’s EDGE tool (see Annex A). The EDGE tool is a self-assessment tool that maps progress against nine key dimensions of institutional support for public engagement:

• Mission - the development of institutions’ missions for public engagement.
• Leadership - senior leaders who act as champions and have an understanding of the importance and value of PER.
• Communication – PER features prominently in internal and external communications and there are resources and strategic support to sustain this.
• Support – there is a focussed plan for co-ordination with clear, formal oversight and resources available to embed PER.
• Learning – the availability of training, professional development and informal learning relating to PER.
• Recognition – PER is rewarded and recognised in formal ways.
• Staff – there are structured opportunities for all staff to get involved in PER, either informally or as part of their agreed duties.
• Students – this is where all students have the opportunity to get involved in PER and are encouraged and supported to do so, formally or informally.
• Public – this dimension covers the assessment of public need for PER, systematic collection of feedback, and agreement to commit resources to supporting a wide range of groups to get involved.

Progress in each dimension is mapped in terms of a number of statements which summarise the extent to which an organisation’s PER practice is:

• Embryonic – institutional support for engagement is patchy or non-existent, although some engagement activity is underway.

http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/self-assess-with-edge-tool
• Developing – some support has been put in place, but in a relatively unsystematic and non-strategic fashion.

• Gripping – the institution is taking steps to develop more systematic and strategic support.

• Embedding – the institution has put in place strategic and operational support for engagement.

In their final reports, five of the eight HEIs\(^{41}\) used the EDGE tool to self-assess their pre- and post-Catalyst position along the continuum, from ‘embryonic’ to ‘embedding’, for each of the nine dimensions. Some HEIs assessed their position as being between two points, for example half-way between ‘gripping’ and ‘embedding’. When summed together (see Figure 1 on the following page), these data illustrate the extent of the Catalysts’ institutional support for public engagement, and the nature of the changes made to this support, since the beginning of the programme in 2012.

The data presented in Figure 1, albeit from just five of the eight HEIs, indicate that:

• Changes have been made in each of the EDGE tool’s nine dimensions of support for public engagement.

• For all dimensions, the Catalysts defined their support for public engagement as significantly more embedded at the end of the programme than at the beginning.

• Catalyst projects reported most progress in terms of mission, leadership, communication, support, learning, recognition, and staff; and less progress in the areas of students and public.

The Catalyst projects’ individual EDGE analyses, and the overall synthesis of these in Figure 1, provide clear evidence of significant impact on the culture of their host HEIs. The Catalysts’ self-evaluation data also confirm their awareness that further focus is needed on measuring the quality and impact of PER activities on public groups and communities, as already suggested by the analysis of other project documentation in section 4.2

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\(^{41}\) Two HEIs did not submit an EDGE analysis and another completed the post-project but not the pre-project evaluation, so their data could not be included in the synthesis. One HEI provided no analysis of their place on the EDGE tool in relation to ‘students’ and another provided no assessment of their progress in relation to the ‘public’ dimension.
Figure 1 – Synthesis of HEIs’ pre- and post-Catalyst self-evaluation using the EDGE tool
9.3. Plans for sustainability

Each of the eight HEIs provided details of how they planned to sustain the changes they had made during the lifetime of their Catalyst projects.

In terms of strategic changes, where new understandings of PER existed and had been clearly defined and articulated in university-wide strategic documents, these looked set to be sustained indefinitely, or at least until the next institutional planning review. Similarly, where changes to formal governance arrangements had been documented or included in strategies and plans, these also appeared to be fully embedded and sustainable in the longer term. As noted in Chapters 2 and 3, seven of the eight HEIs confirmed that on-going financial commitment was in place to sustain central PER support post-Catalyst, from April 2015. For three HEIs, funding for continued PER support and co-ordination had been extended for a further one to three years. For the four others, PER activities had been embedded within core university delivery structures and would be funded indefinitely or at least until the next review of the institutional strategy or corporate plan. The extent of on-going financial commitment to other PER activities (internal awards and funding schemes, provision of PER champions, networking events, etc.) was unclear, although a few HEIs did specify that certain initiatives would continue to be supported either in the short or longer term.

Catalyst HEIs were planning to sustain many of the operational changes they had made during the lifetime of their projects:

- Six HEIs were retaining the new structures they had created to provide co-ordination and visibility for PER activity – four were keeping their newly established central PER units or teams; whilst two others were sustaining their model of dispersed networks and/or senior level champions to facilitate the delivery of support for PER.

- Where changes had been made to elements of core research support (specifically to ethical review, financial and administrative systems for supporting PER, job descriptions, performance and annual review process, promotion criteria and workload allocation), these appeared to be fully embedded and thus likely to be sustained in the longer term.

- Seven of the eight HEIs described how they intended to continue to provide tailored one-to-one and group advice for funding applications, and research projects. Most HEIs were using the same staffing structures to deliver this on-going support. A few had identified other individuals or groups within the university who would take the work forward and in some cases had also made significant online and/or printed resources available to support this on-going input.

- Of the five Catalyst projects that had established their own awards schemes, four had plans for their continuation in the current form. Two Catalyst projects had ‘piggy-backed’ additional recognition for excellence in PER onto existing awards schemes, and in both cases this would be sustained.

- Seven Catalyst projects had established seed funding or grants schemes to support and develop aspects of PER. Of these, five HEIs intended to finance some or all of these funding schemes in the longer term.
• Seven of the eight Catalyst projects were planning to continue the internal networks they had created to share good practice and discuss PER-related issues. For the six HEIs who had also introduced the concept of PER champions or advocates, five of these schemes would be retained.

• Of the four HEIs who had developed PER-specific training programmes, three were continuing for the 2015/16 academic year. Six HEIs had also integrated training on public engagement into other professional development programmes and in all cases this would be sustained.

• Several HEIs were planning to continue exploring methods for measuring the quality and impact of PER activities. For example, the University of Bath specified that its focus for 2015-2018 would be to build a strong evidence base for the value of public engagement with research. This will include measures such as increased grant income, higher quality and more diverse research outputs, and clear research impacts.

In terms of **attitudinal and conceptual** changes, HEIs’ plans for sustainability were difficult to identify. The nature of evidence in relation to these types of changes necessitates collection via carefully designed research and evaluation with staff, students and public. Most HEIs were still at an early stage of development of such methodologies and many had yet to establish the nature of key changes in stakeholders’ attitudes and understanding in relation to PER. This is to be expected, given that the primary remit of the three-year Catalysts programme was firmly focussed on establishing institutional processes and structures for supporting and embedding PER.

### 9.4. Summary

Evidence from the reports shows that there were many PER-related changes for the host HEIs as a result of their involvement in the Catalysts programme. These changes were grouped as follows:

**Strategic changes:**

• Embedding a commitment to PER in corporate plans.

• Development of new, shared understandings of PER at institutional level and their definition and articulation in university-wide strategic documents.

• New institutional PER strategies, or inclusion of PER in other strategies and planning documents.

• Changes to formal governance arrangements to ensure institutional oversight of PER activities.

• Introduction of PER champions who helped to raise the profile of public engagement, formalised a visible commitment to PER and for some HEIs, increased the effectiveness of support available to researchers.

• On-going strategic, financial commitment to sustaining central PER support (and some PER activities) after the end of the funded Catalysts programme.
Operational changes:

- New structures which provide co-ordination and visibility for previously disparate PER activity.
- Changes to elements of core research support and evidence of the outcomes of these changes.
- Increased practical support and new resources for PER.
- New initiatives to trial and embed methods for measuring the quality and impact of PER activities.

Attitudinal changes:

- More recognition of the value and expertise of the Catalyst team.
- Increased motivation and enthusiasm for PER.
- The recognition that public engagement adds value to a university’s core business.
- More cross-university understanding of the role, importance and value of public engagement with research, particularly in terms of being a legitimate and valued component of research roles within HEIs.
- Increased recognition of the value of PER as a potential platform for career enhancement.
- One Catalyst’s evaluation also provided evidence, through baseline and post-project interviews with eight public partners, of changes in public attitudes towards universities, and improved understanding of the work and activities of the host HEI.

Conceptual changes:

- Practice that recognised the two-way nature of public engagement in research, from setting the agenda and defining research questions through to publication and dissemination of research findings.
- Increased breadth and variety of PER undertaken by staff in the Catalyst HEIs.
- Wider understanding that including PER in grant applications makes bids stronger.
- Inclusion of PER as part of the research discourse at most of the Catalyst HEIs.

Self-assessment data from the Catalysts themselves, using the NCCPE’s EDGE tool, provided clear evidence that many of these changes were now embedded and had already made a significant impact on the culture of their host HEIs. The Catalysts’ self-evaluation data also confirmed their awareness that further focus is needed on measuring the quality and impact of PER activities on public groups and communities.

All eight HEIs gave some details of how they planned to sustain the impact of their work. Most Catalysts were planning to retain many of the strategic and operational changes made during the lifetime of their projects. But it was not possible to identify their plans for maintaining attitudinal and conceptual changes from the material available at this stage. The nature of evidence in relation to these types of changes necessitates collection via carefully designed
research and evaluation with staff, students and the public. Most HEIs were still at an early stage of development of such methodologies and many had yet to establish the nature of key changes in stakeholders’ attitudes and understanding in relation to PER.
10. Conclusions

The purpose of this interim review was to synthesise evidence about how the funded activities of individual HEIs have contributed to the aims of the PER Catalysts programme as a whole. RCUK’s full work brief for the review outlined the following key objectives:

- Consider to what extent the Catalysts have met the aims of the call.
- Assess what has changed for the Catalyst HEIs as a result of RCUK investment and the extent to which these changes are embedded and sustainable.
- Examine any impacts or benefits for HEIs as a result of being part of a RCUK-branded programme.
- Synthesise key outputs, outcomes and impacts across the whole initiative.
- Where possible (and data exists to evidence this), synthesise learning from the project in terms of the different models and approaches.

10.1. To what extent have the Catalyst projects met the aims of the call?

Chapters 3 to 8 examined the evidence provided by HEIs about their progress in meeting the aims of the call. To summarise:

- The eight HEIs involved in the Catalysts programme had all found a number of significant ways to signal their strategic commitment to PER, both externally and internally.
- The Catalysts provided evidence in their reports about how they had integrated public engagement into many of the core research activities undertaken by their host HEIs.
- All eight Catalyst projects gave examples of the ways in which their input had helped bring about changes to the reward and recognition of researchers.
- All of the eight Catalyst projects had found numerous ways to encourage and support staff to do public engagement work.
- Most had created internal networks to share good practice, support staff and celebrate public engagement.
- Through their reports, the Catalyst projects provided evidence about how they had contributed to a wider network supportive of public engagement by sharing learning and disseminating best practice in PER.
- All eight of the Catalyst projects provided at least one example of how they had helped to develop and support best practice that recognised the two-way nature of public engagement with research (i.e.: activities that involve interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit).
10.2. What has changed for the Catalyst HEIs as a result of RCUK investment and to what extent are these changes embedded and sustainable?

Chapter 9 considered the evidence relating to changes within the host HEIs as a result of their involvement in the Catalyst programme. To summarise, there were many PER-related changes in terms of processes and outcomes for the host HEIs, which were grouped as follows:

- Strategic changes
- Operational changes
- Attitudinal changes
- Conceptual changes.

A synthesis of EDGE analyses from five Catalyst projects provides clear evidence that many of the changes made were defined as ‘embedded’ and were thus likely to be making a significant impact on the culture within the host HEIs.

Catalysts were planning to retain many of the strategic and operational changes made during the lifetime of their projects. But it was not possible to identify their plans for maintaining attitudinal and conceptual changes from the material available at this stage.

10.3. Were there any benefits for HEIs as a result of being part of a RCUK-branded programme?

The final reporting guidance from RCUK asked Catalyst projects to consider the value of the RCUK brand. A few of the Catalysts offered their thoughts in relation to this query. It was clear that RCUK’s funding provided visibility and credibility, helping to advance culture change more quickly than might otherwise have been expected.

“Being awarded the funding from RCUK was the first step in giving greater visibility to PE across the University; being a RCUK Public Engagement with Research Catalyst has definitely given credibility to PE work across the University.”

“The […] Catalyst has benefitted from being part of the Catalyst network, and the wider network of institutions seeking to achieve culture change for PER. There is no question that the combination of being part of these networks, and having the endorsement of the RCUK “brand” has helped to make more rapid progress than might otherwise have been able to achieve.”

The benefits of being part of a RCUK-funded network in terms of opportunities for support and learning were also noted and appreciated.

“The project has also enabled practice sharing across the HE sector far beyond what we would have been able to do otherwise. The Catalyst project meetings, ENGAGE conference and a range of other conferences and meetings have widened our networks and brought new ideas and approaches to [out university].”
The NCCPE’s final report highlighted the impact of the RCUK brand and the importance of the active role played by the RCUK PER team.

“RCUK’s funding helped open doors for Catalyst teams, giving credibility to their work, and the active involvement of RCUK staff helped share learning across the network.”

(Duncan and Manners, 2015)  

The value of RCUK’s direct involvement in the programme, including attendance by team members at the quarterly coordination meetings, was also acknowledged by one Catalyst:

“RCUK and HEFCE’s presence at the Catalyst team meetings has been useful as they have been party to the experiences of the Catalyst teams, project issues and the development mechanisms for overcoming challenges. This enabled RCUK and HEFCE to develop their own thinking about how to further support public engagement as well as to inform us in real-time about issues under discussion.”

10.4. Synthesise key outputs, outcomes and impact across the whole initiative

The evidence presented in Chapters 3 to 9 of this report provides a synthesis of the key outputs and outcomes of the PER Catalysts programme, from an analysis of the project documentation currently available. Additional details of outputs (in terms of resources and PER platforms) and outcomes against the aims of the programme as a whole are listed in Annexes C, D and E.

The evidence available in project documentation limited exploration of the impact of the programme to the nature of the difference it had made to the HEIs involved (in terms of strategic, operational, attitudinal and conceptual changes) and the extent to which these changes had been embedded and sustained within the culture of the host HEIs.

10.5. Synthesise learning from the project in terms of the different models and approaches

It was not possible to respond to this element of the review’s work brief within the current report. Each HEI took a very different approach to implementing its Catalyst project, with a wide range of structures, staffing arrangements and visions for embedding and sustaining PER. The main brief for this review was to synthesise findings from individual Catalyst projects in order to assess the contribution made by the programme as a whole.

The NCCPE’s report on the learning from the Catalyst projects about embedding culture change and public engagement with research provides some important insights in relation to this area, particularly in terms of factors that can help or hinder depending on the context and the benefits and challenges of the different institutional locations of the Catalysts projects.

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42 https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/nccpe_catalyst_report_may_2016.pdf
43 Duncan, S. and Manners, P., op cit.
10.6. **Recommendations for future review and evaluation work in relation to the PER Catalysts programme**

This interim review was a small-scale, desk-based piece of work, focusing on the documentary analysis of the Catalyst HEIs’ annual, final and evaluation reports only. Data relating to the activities, progress and impact of the Catalysts were gleaned entirely from the written reports they had submitted to RCUK by October 2015. Although we checked each Catalyst’s website (where available) for extra details and links, it was not possible to seek clarification on anything that was unclear or not fully articulated in the reports and other documentation.

This interim review is, therefore, a starting point that needs to be built on by further, more systematic collection of data relating to the processes, outputs, outcomes and impact of each of the Catalyst projects and of the programme overall. In terms of future review and evaluation work we would suggest the following:

1. **Further collection of consistent and comparable data on the processes, outputs and outcomes of each of the Catalyst projects.**

The HEIs were issued with reporting guidance from RCUK, but we found that project reports presented key messages in very different ways. It was difficult, in some cases, to use this material as the primary source for synthesising consistent and comparable data on every aspect to be covered by the review and it is quite possible that some details have been omitted or examples overlooked. There is a need, therefore, for more systematic collection of data relating to the approach of each of the Catalyst projects and the processes they developed for implementing PER within their host HEIs. This could be achieved through a carefully designed online survey to obtain basic comparable data from each Catalyst project, supplemented by qualitative telephone interviews and/or site visits to fill in the gaps by talking directly to those involved.

2. **Further evaluation of the extent to which culture change has been embedded and sustained within the host HEIs beyond the end of the Catalysts programme funding.**

It will be important to talk to Catalyst teams to ascertain if there have been any further operational and strategic changes, as well as to seek data about attitudinal and conceptual changes amongst staff, students and external partners. The extent to which changes have continued to be embedded and sustained will also need to be addressed. Follow-up work could usefully be conducted with the eight Catalyst-funded HEIs, using a mixture of online survey, telephone interviews and site visits. There may also be a need to collect primary data directly from stakeholders, where Catalyst teams have been unable to do so themselves. This could be achieved in partnership with HEIs and the NCCPE, through online surveys or focus groups.
3. An investigation of the impact of the Catalysts programme on the wider sector.

As part of the follow-up work, Catalyst teams could be asked to nominate a number of impacts that they feel their project has had on the wider HE and engagement sector. A ‘forwards tracking’ approach\textsuperscript{44} could then be used to:

- Identify and clarify the nature of the impact and why it is important to the wider sector - e.g. impact on debates, directions in thinking, policy, practice, capacity building, etc.\textsuperscript{45}
- Understand and document the determinants of the impact - why and how these particular positive things have been generated and what role the Catalysts and other stakeholders played in this process.

A case study approach would work well here and might involve interviews and/or focus groups with stakeholders identified by the Catalyst teams who have benefitted from the impacts described.

10.7. Concluding comments

This review has found that when taken as a whole, the activities of the eight RCUK-funded Public Engagement with Research Catalysts projects have fully met the aims of the programme overall. Involvement in the Catalysts programme has led to numerous and significant changes (in terms of processes and outcomes) for the eight HEIs. Many of these changes have now been embedded at strategic and operational levels and will be sustained in the longer term, thus showing clear evidence of culture change within the universities involved in the Catalysts programme.

\textsuperscript{44} ESRC (2009) ‘Taking stock: a summary of ESRC’s work to evaluate the impact of research on policy and practice’, Swindon: ESRC.

## Annex A  NCCPE’s EDGE Tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Embryonic</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Gripping</th>
<th>Embedding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>There is little or no reference to public engagement in the organisational mission or in other institution-wide strategies</td>
<td>PE is referenced sporadically within the institutional mission documents and strategies, but is not considered a priority area</td>
<td>PE is clearly referenced within the institutional mission and strategies and the institution is developing an institution-wide strategic approach</td>
<td>PE is prioritised in the institution’s official mission and in other key strategies, with success indicators identified. It is a key consideration in strategic developments in the institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Few (if any) of the most influential leaders in the institution serve as champions for public engagement</td>
<td>Some of the institution’s senior team act as informal champions for public engagement</td>
<td>Some of the institution’s senior team act as formal champions for public engagement</td>
<td>The VC acts as a champion for PE and a senior leader takes formal responsibility. All senior leaders have an understanding of the importance and value of public engagement to the institution’s agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>The institution’s commitment to public engagement is rarely if ever featured in internal or external communications</td>
<td>Public engagement occasionally features in internal and external communications</td>
<td>Public engagement frequently features in internal communications, but rarely as a high profile item or with an emphasis on its strategic importance</td>
<td>PE appears prominently in the institution’s internal communications; its strategic importance is highlighted, and resources and strategic support have been allocated to sustain this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>There is no attempt to co-ordinate public engagement activity or to network learning and expertise across the institution</td>
<td>There are some informal attempts being made to co-ordinate PE activities, but there is no strategic plan for this work. Some self-forming networks exist, not supported by the institution</td>
<td>Oversight and co-ordination of PE has been formally allocated (e.g. to a working group or committee) but there is minimal support and resource to invest in activity</td>
<td>The institution has a strategic plan to focus its co-ordination, a body/ies with formal responsibility for oversight of this plan, and resources available to assist the embedding of PE. There are a number of recognised and supported networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>There is little or no opportunity for staff or students to access professional development to develop their skills &amp; knowledge of engagement</td>
<td>There are some opportunities for staff or students to access professional development and training in PE, but no formal or systematic support</td>
<td>There are some formal opportunities for staff or students to access professional development and training in PE.</td>
<td>Staff and students are encouraged and supported in accessing professional development, training and informal learning to develop their skills and knowledge of engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Embryonic</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Gripping</td>
<td>Embedding</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Staff are not formally rewarded or recognised for their PE activities</td>
<td>Some departments recognise and reward PE activity on an ad hoc basis.</td>
<td>The university is working towards an institution-wide policy for recognising and rewarding PE activity</td>
<td>The university has reviewed its processes, and developed a policy to ensure PE is rewarded &amp; recognised in formal and informal ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Few if any opportunities exist for staff to get involved in public engagement, either informally or as part of their formal duties</td>
<td>There are opportunities for staff in a handful of faculties or departments to get involved in PE, either informally or as part of their formal duties</td>
<td>There are structured opportunities for many staff members to get involved in PE; but not in all faculties or departments. There is a drive to expand opportunities to all</td>
<td>All staff have the opportunity to get involved in public engagement, either informally or as part of their formal duties, and are encouraged and supported to do so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Few opportunities exist for students to get involved in PE, either informally, through volunteering programmes or as part of the formal curriculum</td>
<td>There are opportunities for students to get involved, but there is no coordinated approach to promoting and supporting these opportunities across the institution</td>
<td>Many (but not all) students have the opportunity to get involved in PE and are encouraged and supported to do so. There is a drive to expand opportunities to all</td>
<td>All students have the opportunity to get involved in PE, and are encouraged and supported to do so. The institution offers both formal and informal ways to recognize and reward their involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Little or no attempt has been made to assess community need, or to support ‘non-traditional’ groups in engaging with the institution</td>
<td>Some attempt has been made to analyse community need and interest; and to begin to tackle access issues to open up the institution and its activities to the public</td>
<td>The institution has committed resources to assessing community need and interests, and to using this insight and feedback to inform its strategy and plans</td>
<td>The institution has assessed need &amp; committed resources to supporting a wide range of groups to access its facilities and activities, and to systematically seek their feedback and involvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Annex B  PER Catalysts Programme: Impact Framework

#### Catalyst call: triggers for final reporting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RCUK Aims &amp; objectives</th>
<th>Catalyst Objectives</th>
<th>Possible activities</th>
<th>Data / evidence of change</th>
<th>What would you do differently? What next?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AIM 1</strong> Create a culture within grant holding HEIs where excellent public engagement with research is embedded</td>
<td>Strategic commitment</td>
<td>Embedding public engagement with research within strategic goals, planning cycles, formal governance, academic workload planning or within the responsibilities of senior managers</td>
<td>Changed job descriptions that include PE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>An institutional PER strategy or mission</td>
<td>Changes to planning cycles that support PE ‒ e.g. included in workload planning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Developing a shared definition of PE</td>
<td>Integration of PE within strategic plans</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Departmental PER strategies</td>
<td>Creation of a shared definition of PE and evidence of use</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership development focused on embedding PE</td>
<td>Changes to formal governance arrangements to ensure oversight of PE</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation of quality and impact of activities and policies to inform practice and planning</td>
<td>Numbers of leaders trained and any evidence of impact of that training on their practice</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Allocation of strategic funding to support public engagement with research during lifetime of Catalyst</td>
<td>Input prepared for the REF or within HEFCE, or Knowledge Transfer Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Development of investment case for long term sustainability of the Catalyst and sign on from this</td>
<td>Submission of public engagement with research activities within the RCUK Research Outcomes System or ResearchFish</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Development of strategic partnerships and collaborations with external stakeholders such as community partners</td>
<td>Inclusion of public engagement within RCUK Pathways to Impact or other funders’ schemes and evidence of funding secured</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intelligence gathering about public perceptions and into areas of need / opportunity to inform planning</td>
<td>Investment of strategic funds to sustain activity of the Catalyst</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recognising public engagement with research in awards, recruitment criteria, promotion criteria, performance review</td>
<td>Evidence from evaluation of impact of above activities on culture, practice</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Practical support</strong></td>
<td>Number of external partners engaged and extent of satisfaction</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Building capacity for public engagement with research through creating champions, networks, professional development, partnership working and creation of resources</td>
<td>Sign up to NCCPE manifesto</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Practical support for public engagement with research e.g. central support and an indication of number of staff working in these roles.</td>
<td>Changes to reward / recognition processes</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Training provision for public engagement with research</td>
<td>Numbers / examples of staff who have been rewarded</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Communicate clear messages about the value and purpose of PE to the institution / department through events and conferences, publicity materials, newsletters, web presence</td>
<td>Perception of researchers about how PE is valued in their institution</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provision of opportunities / platforms for researchers to engage with the public</td>
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<td>Offering advice to other HEIs; contributing to consultations; speaking at events; creating resources to share learning with others</td>
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<td>Types / quantity of resources created and evidence of uptake and impact on users</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Breadth and depth of participation in activities — e.g. numbers of staff trained and/or advised, attending events, subscribing to newsletters or joining networks; champions / coordinators created</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Evidence from evaluation of impact of above activities on staff practice / attitudes</td>
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<td>Data on awareness, support and capacity for public engagement from assessment, evaluation and national surveys (e.g. CROS/HELS and/or institutional surveys)</td>
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<td>New Institutional arrangements that integrate PE into existing networks / support structures</td>
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<td>Evidence of number / demographics of publics engaged and the impact of their involvement</td>
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<td>Extent of ‘outreach’ to other HEIs and evidence of impact</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Annex C  PER platforms and opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catalyst project</th>
<th>Highlighting existing opportunities and platforms</th>
<th>Ensuring their HEI’s involvement in national or regional initiatives</th>
<th>HEI hosted platforms and opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Aberdeen         | • Monthly e-zine to highlight opportunities      | • Regional hub status for the ESRC’s Festival of Social Sciences and the AHRC-funded Being Human Festival  
• British Science Week  
• Glasgow Science Festival  
• European Researchers’ Night (Explorathon)  
• TechFest-in-September | • University of Aberdeen May Festival  
• Community cafe programme  
• Annual Lecture Series  
• Research Busking  
• Meet the Researcher events regularly throughout year |
| Bath             | • ESRC’s Festival of Social Science  
• AHRC-funded Being Human Festival  
• Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institutions monthly STEM workshops  
• British Science Association’s Science Communication conference  
• NCCPE’s Engage conference | • Royal Society Summer Science Exhibition  
• Pint of Science Festival | • Science Cafe  
• General University Lecture Programme  
• Celebrating Engaged Research  
• Images of Research  
• Bath Inspires  
• Bath Taps into Science |
| Exeter           | • ESRC’s Festival of Social Science  
• AHRC-funded Being Human Festival  
• The Big Bang Fair |                                    |                                        |
| IOE              |                                                 | • London Festival of Education | • Ask a Professor Blog  
• IOE Blog  
• Research News – a bi-monthly e-bulletin for policy makers, teachers and researchers |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catalyst project</th>
<th>Highlighting existing opportunities and platforms</th>
<th>Ensuring their HEI’s involvement in national or regional initiatives</th>
<th>HEI hosted platforms and opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Nottingham       | • Community Forum database of 400+ organisations representing a variety of publics and community groups, of whom 100 have expressed an interest in PER | • Call for Participants - a platform to encourage public participation in research studies  
• Screens in the Wild - a collaborative project utilising media screens located in urban spaces  
• Mayfest - community open day event | • Nottingham on Tour project - to bring lectures and academic research out of the University and into community and public venues in Nottingham city and shire  
• Brain Matters – brought together third sector and community partners with researchers and health care practitioners to look at the impact of brain injury, dementia and stroke  
• Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) was delivered via the Futurelearn Platform with over 9000 learners being involved with research into public perceptions of shale gas extraction  
• Planning a Bright Club comedy format  
• Developing a Research Cafe in the city centre |
| Open University  | • New role of Community Engagement Officer will help to broker links with community groups | | • Participation Now – an accessible, indexed, searchable and expanding collection of 150 contemporary examples of participatory public engagement. Participation Now also offers a space for researchers and practitioners to network and debate the possibilities and difficulties associated with different forms of emerging practice and opportunities for further innovation. Thirty-five blog-style contributions have been published in this part of the site. http://www.open.edu/openlearn/society/ |
| Queen Mary University of London | • New role of Community Engagement Officer will help to broker links with community groups | | • The Catalyst team commissioned a film project with a local youth organisation to promote engagement and participation, which included three partner community groups  
• A series of training sessions are currently in development; one for local residents who might wish to get involved with research, and one for lay members of research advisory |
## Catalyst project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catalyst project</th>
<th>Highlighting existing opportunities and platforms</th>
<th>Ensuring their HEI’s involvement in national or regional initiatives</th>
<th>HEI hosted platforms and opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheffield</td>
<td>• ESRC’s Festival of Social Science</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Festival of the Mind 2012 and 2014</td>
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<td>• Ideas Bazaar 2012, 2013 and 2014</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Mobile University (September 2013)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Delivery of faculty focused research platforms - linking with national PE campaigns like British Science Week, ESRC Festival of Social Science, and others</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sheffield Festival of Science &amp; Engineering 2013 and 2015</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Life Festival 2014</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Festival of Social Science (November 2013 and 2014)</td>
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<td>• Tour de Cinema (March 2014)</td>
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<td>• Doc/Fest (June 2013/March 2014/June 2014 and March 2015)</td>
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<td>• Off the Shelf (October 2013 &amp; 2014)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Collaborative work with Sheffield City Council.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Annex D  PER resources developed by the Catalyst projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catalyst project</th>
<th>Link to website</th>
<th>Resources available on website</th>
<th>Other available resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Aberdeen         | http://www.abdn.ac.uk/engage/ | • Case studies of PER in practice  
http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/scisoc/AberdeenCatalystFinalReport.pdf/ |
| Bath             | http://www.bath.ac.uk/marketing/public-engagement/index.html | • Case studies of engaged researchers  
                   • Case studies of specific projects  
                   • Videos from the 2014 Celebrating Engaged Research event  
                   • Case studies and an introductory guide to engaging with industry  
                   • Planning for Impact Toolkit  
                   • Social Media Toolkit  
                   • Resources section covering guides, evaluation, readings and videos | • Monthly newsletter to members of the Public Engagement Network  
• In progress - Change Agency and Public Engagement Self-Assessment Toolkit  
| Exeter           | http://blogs.exeter.ac.uk/catalyst/about/ (no longer being updated) | • Reading list  
| IOE              | http://www.ioe.ac.uk/research/86369.html | • Case studies of public engagement activities  
                   • Links to publications about PER by IOE authors and others | • Ask a Professor blog  
https://askaprofessorblog.wordpress.com/  
• Final report: Oliver, S., Hinds, K., Rees, R., Knight, A., Twamley, |
## Catalyst project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catalyst project</th>
<th>Link to website</th>
<th>Resources available on website</th>
<th>Other available resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Nottingham       | In progress - no dedicated website for PER at present | • In progress – online PER resources for staff and public are currently being developed | • In progress - creating a catalogue of case studies associated with the Partnership Fund to determine how this fund has assisted in ‘oiling the wheels’ of public engagement with ‘hard to reach’ publics and encouraging research and academic staff to engage with a wider variety of publics.  
http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/scisoc/UCLInstituteofEducationFinalReport-pdf/ |
| Open University  | http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/per | • Engaging Research blog - featuring more than 90 posts from more than 30 OU researchers and nearly 20 external stakeholders  
• Online resources covering: giving public lectures about research; how to organise a research cafe; participatory design with young people; digital practices of engaged researchers; researching and practising science communication; and more.  
• Videos of 12 seminars on Engaging Research | • Designing public-centric forms of public engagement with research – a pamphlet exploring the publics of engaged research (downloadable from the website)  
• Snakes and ladders of social media – a board game to support researchers as they explore how social media might act as channel for engagement (downloadable from the website)  
• Blog posts describing the aims, methods and findings from three projects funded to explore ways of evidencing the impacts of engaged research (downloadable from the website)  
• Published journal article on mapping public engagement with research (downloadable from the website)  
• Final report: Holliman, R., Adams, A., Blackman, T., Collins, T., |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catalyst project</th>
<th>Link to website</th>
<th>Resources available on website</th>
<th>Other available resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Queen Mary University of London        | http://www.qmul.ac.uk/publicengagement/index.html         | • Case studies of recent engagement activates  
• Two good practice guides on: working with the curriculum; doing a basic evaluation - further guides are in progress  
| Sheffield                              | http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/publicengagement           | • Online toolkits covering: what is public engagement; organising a PE event; costing PE; PE and impact; communicating with non-specialists; promoting your event; risk assessments; working with partners, public engagement and outreach; evaluation  
http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/scisoc/SheffieldCatalystFinalreport-pdf/  
• The PEI team worked with Hilary Sutcliffe from Matter for all, to develop a Stakeholder engagement toolkit which was presented in one of the masterclasses and made available online  
https://prezi.com/o79ego8_uwyb/april-30-sheffield-prezi/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy |
## Annex E  Summary of processes and outcomes against the aims of the PER Catalysts programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AIMS</th>
<th>PROCESSES</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To create a strategic commitment to public engagement with research</td>
<td>Embedded a commitment to PER in corporate plans</td>
<td>• Four HEIs had achieved the inclusion of PER in their host HEIs’ corporate plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developed and established a shared understanding of PER</td>
<td>• Four had developed and defined a shared understanding of PER, the wording of which was now embedded in university-wide strategic documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• For the other four HEIs, there was evidence that they had focussed on developing a shared understanding, but less explicit reference in their reports to development and agreement of a specific definition of PER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developed institutional PER strategies, or included PER in other strategies and planning documents</td>
<td>• Two HEIs had developed an institutional PER strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Seven HEIs provided evidence of the inclusion of PER in other strategies and planning documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Created senior leadership and engagement champions to oversee and promote PER</td>
<td>• Four HEIs made changes to their formal governance arrangements to ensure institutional oversight of PER activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• All eight recognised the importance of high level champions who could create institutional respect and recognition for engagement activities and represent a PER ‘voice’ on strategic working groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Many of the Catalyst projects had also created formal and informal PER champions to support and embed a culture of engaged research at an academic level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Made a financial commitment to PER</td>
<td>• Six HEIs provided details of their financial commitment to PER through institutional funding of a range of PER support and activities during the lifetime of their Catalyst projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Seven HEIs confirmed that on-going financial commitment was in place to sustain central PER support post-Catalyst, from April 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To integrate public engagement into the core</td>
<td>Provided practical support for core research activities that</td>
<td>• Support with developing funding applications including ‘pathways to impact’ statements (seven HEIs), resulting in PER-related support to at least 800 academic staff and input to at least 300 grant applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIMS</td>
<td>PROCESSES</td>
<td>OUTCOMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| research activities of HEIs              | emphasised the importance of PER                                           | • Evidencing PER activities - e.g. support with preparing impact statements for the REF, submission of PER activities within the RCUK Research Outcomes System or ResearchFish (four HEIs)  
• Input and guidance on including/embedding engagement activities into different parts of the research process (all eight HEIs)  
• Changes to ethical and administrative processes to facilitate PER (two HEIs) |
| Measured the quality and impact of PER activities |                                                                             | • All eight Catalysts had undertaken some form of research or evaluation work to collect evidence about the progress and impact of their projects  
• Five Catalysts teams had conducted their own research, whilst in two cases, other university staff from outside the Catalyst team were recruited to undertake evaluation tasks  
• One HEI had commissioned an independent evaluation from an external research organisation which ran alongside the Catalyst and reported at interim and final stages  
• Five Catalysts had employed some element of a pre- and post-programme design, comparing baseline data collected at the start of their programme with follow-up data collected in 2015 using the same research tools  
• Of these, three HEIs took a primarily formative approach, using mixed methods to explore and inform their Catalyst work  
• Two had chosen to focus their efforts primarily on summative evaluation against aims and objectives, using qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups  
• Several HEIs were planning to continue exploring methods for measuring the quality and impact of PER activities post-Catalyst. |
| To reward and recognise researchers involved in public engagement | Made changes to job descriptions, performance reviews and promotion criteria | • All eight of the Catalyst projects had found ways to flag up the importance of incorporating public engagement into job descriptions, performance reviews and promotion criteria |
|                                           | Provided evidence of PER-led promotions                                  | • Two HEIs provided evidence of four PER-led promotions to Professor during the timescale of their Catalyst projects |
|                                           | Made changes to workload management to include PER                       | • Six HEIs made specific mention of changes to workload frameworks or role recognition, which took into account PER activities |
## AIMS
- To encourage and support researchers and staff at all levels to become involved

### PROCESSES
What activities did HEIs undertake to achieve the aims?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support and activities</th>
<th>Established PER award schemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seven of the eight Catalyst projects had either established their own award schemes for recognising excellence in PER, or had ‘piggy-backed’ on an existing award scheme, for example by adding a new category related to public engagement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### OUTCOMES
What immediate and post-programme changes were made as a result of the Catalysts’ activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supported funding applications and plans for research projects</th>
<th>Provided training and opportunities for professional development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seven projects offered tailored, one-to-one support with grant applications (including ‘pathways to impact’ statements).</td>
<td>Mentoring and one-to-one training/professional development (all eight HEIs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four provided other forms of application support via group workshops, master classes, case studies and good practice guidance materials or toolkits.</td>
<td>PER-specific training and professional development programmes (four HEIs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One university had developed a Public Research Interest Group which provided ‘lay’ expertise in reviewing research proposals from around 50 public members.</td>
<td>Integrating PER training to other professional development programmes (six HEIs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four HEIs also helped researchers to provide systematic evidence of their engagement activities, for example through impact statements for the REF, submissions to the RCUK Research Outcomes System or ResearchFish, and other forms of formal feedback on the outcomes and impact of PER.</td>
<td>Input on PER to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes (six HEIs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the Catalyst projects had found ways to offer input and guidance on PER throughout the research life cycle, from agenda setting, to designing methodologies and forms of dissemination that enabled the participation of different people, communities and groups.</td>
<td>Workshops and other one-off learning opportunities (four HEIs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven of the eight Catalyst projects had established seed funding or grants schemes to support, explore and develop aspects of PER, resulting in at least 174 additional public engagement projects being funded and</td>
<td>At least 5,300 individuals (researchers, students, and professionals support staff) have taken part in informal and formal learning as a result of the Catalysts programme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Set up seed funding or grants schemes |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AIMS</th>
<th>PROCESSES</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supported as a result of the Catalysts programme.</td>
<td>Provided and sign-posted PER platforms and opportunities</td>
<td>• Highlighting existing opportunities and platforms for PER, such as local initiatives or national festivals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Proactively working with the organisers to ensure their HEI’s involvement in these national or regional initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Creating new platforms and opportunities for public engagement activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed PER resources</td>
<td>Developed PER resources</td>
<td>• All of the eight Catalyst projects developed resources for raising awareness of PER and sharing good practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To create networks within institutions to share good practice,</td>
<td>Created internal networks to create networks to share good practice,</td>
<td>• Two HEIs set up online or email based PER networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>institutions to share good practice, celebrate their work and</td>
<td>share good practice, support staff and celebrate public engagement</td>
<td>• Six established networks that meet regularly for discussion and to host events or training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ensure that those involved in public engagement feel supported</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Two helped to create PER networks aimed at students</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To contribute to a wider network supportive of public engagement</td>
<td>Contributed to wider networks supportive of public engagement</td>
<td>• All eight of the Catalyst projects had shared advice and learning with other HEIs, through personal visits, teaching engagements,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including the NCCPE, other recipient HEIs and the wider HE</td>
<td></td>
<td>invitations to speak at other HEIs’ seminars or conferences, or partnership working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Six of the eight HEIs provided information about the events their Catalyst staff had been involved with as speakers or presenters</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Three of the Catalyst project teams had been involved in contributing to external consultations relating to aspects of public</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>engagement in research, including for example the development of guidance for the recently launched RCUK Catalyst Seed Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• All eight of the Catalyst projects had found ways to share learning about PER more widely across the sector and outside of HEIs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To build on experience from the Beacons and other HEIs to develop</td>
<td>Helped to develop and support examples of embedded PER in practice</td>
<td>• All eight of the Catalyst projects had supported PER activities that reflected researchers’ understanding of the benefits of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>best practice that recognises the two-way nature of PER</td>
<td></td>
<td>engaged research as a mutually beneficial dialogue with the potential to be embedded at different stages of the research process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>