



National
Co-ordinating
Centre for
Public Engagement

Public and Community Engagement in the KEF

A thematic review



Acknowledgements

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Executive summary

This report provides a thematic review of the 117 Public and Community Engagement (P&CE) narratives submitted in October 2020 by English HEIs to the first iteration of the Knowledge Exchange Framework. These narratives reveal rich intelligence about how the English university sector is currently organising its work to support public and community engagement. Our review has explored their strategic approaches; the kinds of support they are investing in; the types of activities they deliver; and the ways in which they are monitoring and evaluating both their practice and their institutional support. An overview of the KEF is provided as an appendix.

There are obvious limitations to the data. While the guidance provided a set of prompts for HEIs to respond to, HEIs had a lot of latitude in how they chose to respond to these, making it hard to draw hard and fast conclusions or comparisons between them. The scope of Public and Community Engagement was left deliberately broad by Research England, resulting in rather different interpretations of where the boundaries might be drawn around the area. And of course, the KEF is a public assessment exercise, so HEIs will have been careful about what they chose to include and exclude.

Despite this, we have found enormous value in reviewing the narratives, and have been able to draw out some useful intelligence about the current 'state of play' of Public and Community Engagement in the sector. We draw out some overarching conclusions below, before summarising the key findings from each section of the report.

Some key take away messages

- Public and Community Engagement is in robust health. HEIs are prioritising this work, enthusiastic about it, and in many cases, have a long-standing commitment to the area. It is an important ongoing strand of work, underpinning their commitment to creating social value and 'making a difference'.
- The dominant mode of engagement is to 'inspire and inform' the public, with just under 80% of the reported activities focused on this goal. However, a small but significant proportion of the reported activity involves participatory practices and seeks to actively involve communities in knowledge building, and many HEIs express commitment to extending work of this nature.
- The narratives are dominated by a local and regional focus. 65 of the 117 institutions frame their Public and Community engagement through a civic, place-based or anchor narrative. Many aim to integrate their P&CE within a holistic approach to place-based working, drawing connections (for instance) between business and public engagement, with the goal of realising inclusive economic development.
- There is a strong commitment to inclusive practice, with HEIs prioritising work which addresses inequality and engages with marginalised groups in society.
- Many HEIs are grappling with the challenge of how to monitor and evaluate their work in this area and identify this as an area where they want to significantly improve their practice.
- Whilst there is much to be encouraged by, there is also a lot more work to be done if P&CE is to deliver its full potential. Notable areas of development are around how P&CE can contribute to the strategic aims of the institution; how HEIs can better develop and sustain their work with communities at a local, national, and international scale; and (noted above) how this work can be evaluated and the impacts and/ or value better understood.

We summarise the key findings from each chapter on the next two pages.



Executive summary cont.

1. The purpose and practice of public engagement

The first chapter explores how HEIs describe and frame their approach to P&CE, and their purposes for supporting it; the policy drivers they prioritise; how they relate their engagement to their place / location; who they work with to achieve their goals; and the kinds of activities they foreground.

1. The purpose and practice of P&CE: Key findings

- HEIs most commonly justify their P&CE work through the lens of a civic responsibility to respond to societal needs and challenges.
- This civic responsibility is often framed through Civic University Agreements.
- The narratives prioritise a 'local' frame of reference for their P&CE, although HEIs are often engaging at local, regional, national and international scales.
- The dominant mode of engagement is through activities designed to 'inspire and inform', and the goal of sharing knowledge with publics is the most common approach.
- While much of the activity described is linked to forms of knowledge exchange, many HEIs also include activity that is focused on neighbourliness and social responsibility without a direct link to KE.
- Engaging with marginalised groups and tackling exclusion is a high priority for HEIs.

2. How HEIs support public engagement

This chapter looks in detail at the way HEIs organise and govern their practical support for P&CE, how they fund P&CE, and their approach to working in partnerships. The support faces in two directions: **inward**, to build capacity, and **outward** to support public and community.

2. How HEIs support P&CE: Key findings

Narratives identified a range of approaches to support P&CE activity. Many of these reflect the EDGE tool criteria for building support for P&CE. These included:

- Dedicated staff resource – including P&CE specific central staff, staff in wider centralised KE departments with P&CE in their job role, and staff who support P&CE at a department or research centre scale.
- Building staff and students capacity for P&CE, through offering training, although many of the references to training were not explicit about their P&CE focus.
- Seed funding to support staff to engage the public.
- Supporting public involvement, including publics in governance roles, and providing access points for communities.
- The importance of including P&CE in reward and recognition, including promotion criteria, award schemes, and performance reviews.
- Whilst the funding provided for this work was not an explicit ask of the KEF – those who chose to cite funding sources included HEIF, research council grants, and QR funding.



Executive summary cont.

3. Making a difference

This chapter focuses on how HEIs approach the evaluation of P&CE. It examines how they define the impacts of their P&CE, and how they monitor and evaluate these, both at a project and at an institutional level.

3. Making a difference: Key findings

- Unsurprisingly, many HEIs highlighted that their approaches to monitoring and evaluation were very much ‘work in progress’: they are grappling with how to support this work well.
- While there was useful intelligence about how HEIs approached their evaluation of P&CE, it was often scattered across the narratives. However, there were some examples of HEIs with clearly articulated institutional approaches.
- There were two broad focal points for evaluation: **strategic evaluation** which sought to monitor the effectiveness of their institutional strategy and support; and **project evaluation** which monitored and evaluated the impact of their engagement activities.
- HEIs rarely linked the evaluation data they collect back to their overarching strategic goals.
- In evaluating their activities, HEIs rely heavily on collecting basic monitoring data e.g., attendee numbers at events.

4. The context for public engagement

This chapter steps back from the P&CE narratives, and contextualises them by a light touch review of the other narratives submitted by HEIs. It explores if and how publics and communities are referenced in HEIs’ overarching approach to KE

4. The context for P&CE: Key findings

- Public & Community Engagement features as a significant thread in both the Institutional Context & Local Growth & Regeneration narratives, with many HEIs foregrounding publics & communities as important ‘stakeholders’ in their work and identifying the pursuit of public benefit as a core strategic imperative.
- Many HEIs frame their approach to KE as a route to generating social, cultural and economic renewal, with a focus on inclusion and on local and regional connections and impact.
- Rather than approaching different strands of KE (Local growth, institutional strategy, P&CE) as separate domains, HEIs are increasingly approaching them in a holistic and integrated way.
- In this context, the P&CE narratives clarify how HEIs are enhancing their professional support to better meet the needs, interests and expectations of the public, and in the process enhancing their overarching social mission to ‘make a difference’ in their communities.
- This has resulted in a rich picture of the diversity of approaches and philosophies animating HEI practice, but also a significant amount of overlap across the KEF narratives. There are also some significant gaps and absences in the evidence and insight that is being captured, which would benefit from further attention.



Executive summary cont.

Some final reflections

The KEF narratives have provided a rich and diverse snapshot of how HEIs are making sense of P&CE. Many of the returns suggested this was work in progress, with a significant commitment to develop this area of work effectively. Whilst some institutions have a firm grip on this area of work, including those who have benefited from investment in developing institutional support for public engagement with research (e.g. through previous RCUK funding for culture change initiative around P&CE with research; Wellcome ISSF funding etc.), there was a clear sense across the sector that there was more to be done.

A growing emphasis on social purpose

Our review revealed a sector that is increasingly focused on clarifying and communicating its social purpose. The importance of connecting with publics and communities is now acting as a 'big idea' to describe the overarching ambition of many HEIs, often linked to a growing focus on place and on their civic role. The invitation to submit P&CE narratives has allowed HEIs to articulate their distinctive approaches to delivering on this ambition. This is a positive development, but it does raise questions around the scope of P&CE, and its relationship to other forms of external engagement.

Defining the scope of public and community engagement

The KEF guidance was deliberately broad, and sought not to define P&CE too prescriptively. The rich and diverse tapestry revealed across the sector evidenced different framings, understanding, and practices of P&CE work. This included differences in:

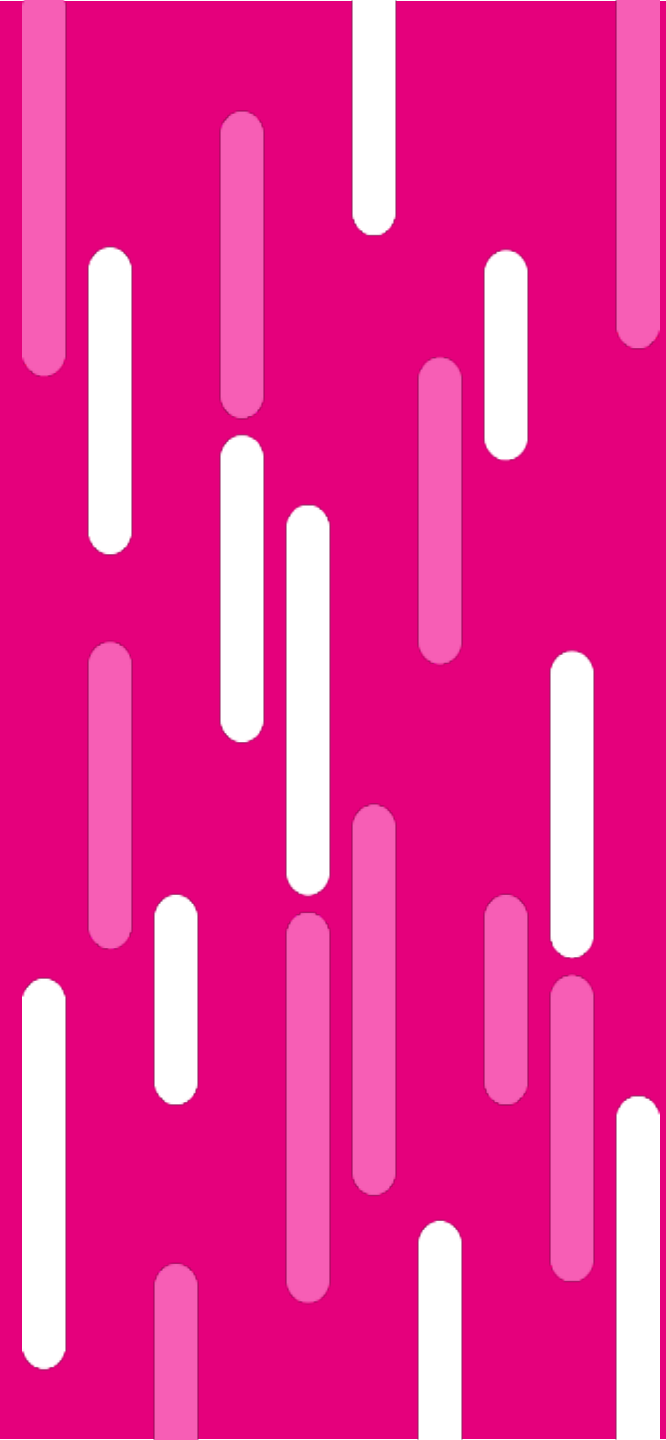
- Interpretations of P&CE. There tended to be two main framings, one focused on the public in P&CE and one focused on the community in P&CE. The former focused more on inspiring and informing publics, the latter more on participatory practices, informed by and alongside communities
- The scope of P&CE. Some HEIs defined this very broadly (by focusing on public benefit) and others foreground interaction and engagement with communities as the defining characteristic of P&CE.

The future of the P&CE in the KEF

It is important to consider whether the current framing of P&CE in the KEF enabled all HEIs to adequately represent their distinctive approach to engaging with the public, and did not inadvertently favour some approaches over others. These different definitions and framings of P&CE pose a challenge for future iterations of the KEF, and raises the question as to whether there would be value in clarifying and tightening the focus of the P&CE perspective. Chapter Four reflects on the overlaps between the P&CE narrative and other areas of the KEF, and Chapter Five offers a draft set of indicators, drawn from our research, which might be used across the sector to help to standardise reporting.

We hope that this report, and the frameworks we have developed to make sense of the narratives, will provide useful triggers for ongoing development of our collective work in this area. We look forward to robust debate about these findings, and the opportunity to use them to inform the evolution of the KEF, to ensure it provides the most helpful structure to describe, share and critique our collective work.

Methodology



Methodology



The 'lenses' through which we investigated the narratives

This report summarises the key insights that emerged from the NCCPE's deep dive into the KEF narratives and is framed through the following four lenses. These lenses were informed by an earlier stage of analysis of the KEF returns carried out by NCCPE in early 2021. Based on this initial analysis, we identified the following questions to guide our deep dive into the narratives:

1. The purpose and practice of public engagement

- How do HEIs describe and frame their approach to P&CE, and their purposes for supporting it?
- What policy drivers do HEIs foreground for their P&CE work?
- How do HEIs relate their P&CE work to their place?
- What kinds of activities do HEIs foreground?
- Which publics / communities do they work with to achieve their goals?

2. How HEIs support public engagement

- How do HEIs organise themselves to deliver and support P&CE?
- What resources do HEIs allocate? What funding do they draw on?
- How do HEIs approach partnership working?

3. Making a difference

- How do HEIs define the impacts of their P&CE?
- How do HEIs monitor and evaluate these impacts?

4. The wider context for public engagement

- What do the KEF narratives tell us about the P&CE sector?
- What are the key areas of reflection based on the KEF narratives?



Methodology cont.

We used a mixture of higher-level text searching, and full narrative reviews. This reflects the nature of the information captured in the narratives, which includes both explicit and implied detail about each institution's approach to P&CE.

The data was organised under the different P&CE narrative section headings.

High-level searches

We conducted high-level searches on the strategy, support, results and learning and acting on results sections (see table 1).

We created a list of search terms which we ran through Nvivo¹.

For the 'Strategy' and 'Results and Learning' sections we conducted two rounds of searches. This was to accommodate additional search terms arising through the analysis process.

Table 1 sets out the search terms we used.

¹ NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software program which is used to organise and analyse text, video and image data

Table 1: Key search terms

*refers to the use of truncation/wildcard operator

Narrative section	Level 1 search terms		Level 2 search terms	
Strategy	Aims Objective* Goal Centrally Resources Strategy Implement*	Consultation Priority Leadership Policy Partner Collaborator Social responsibility	Civic Place-based Social care Wellbeing Employability Inclusion Equality Economic	Diversity Level up Levelling up Local Regional National International Place-making
Support	Training Development Brokerage Facilitate* Resources Community need Internal fund* HEIF fund* Research fund* University fund*	Institutional fund* Faculty fund* Partner fund* Workload New centre Specialist staff Public advisory Public governance Volunteer* Seed funding QR	Wellcome British Academy Innovate Local council Central government Lottery Heritage	
Results and learning	KPI* Outcome framework Systematic evaluation Award Monitoring	Reward excellence Culture change Theory of change Recognition	Culture Reward EDGE Watermark	
Acting on results	Staff feedback Student feedback Public feedback Feedback from Our learning Reward	Recognition Excellence Learning from Improve Culture change		



Methodology cont.

Each search result was checked for accuracy and coded in NVivo under the relevant categories. Many of these high-level search results were then coded further into sub-categories.

Full narrative reviews

We carried out full narrative reviews on the Activity and Summary sections of the P&CE narratives.

The Summary sections provided very concise statements of intent, and therefore provided a useful overview to begin the process of identifying themes. We coded any references made to a HEI's P&CE aims, objectives or goals, and how they framed their P&CE approach.

The Activity sections were selected for full review due to the nature of the data. A very broad range of activities were included in the narratives; however, these often did not use unified language which prevented them being easily coded with accuracy. This accords with the NCCPE's review of the REF 2014, where a range of terminology was used by HEIs to describe public engagement and public involvement in research¹.

Subsequent rounds of analysis responded to the questions posed through the four lenses. This resulted in us conducting at least partial narrative reviews on each of the P&CE sections. Additionally, due to the exploratory nature of this review, we returned to the narratives throughout the analysis process.

Whilst our review focused primarily on the P&CE narratives, we did also do a level of analysis on the Institutional Context (IC) statements and Local Growth and Regeneration (LG&R) narratives. This analysis was used to underpin the findings coming from the P&CE narratives. We looked across the IC, LG&R and P&CE summaries to identify if and how HEIs refer to engagement practices across the different aspects of the KEF return. Similarly, we also looked for synergies across the LG&R and P&CE strategy sections.

¹ www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/reviewing_pe_in_ref_2014_final.pdf

Comparators

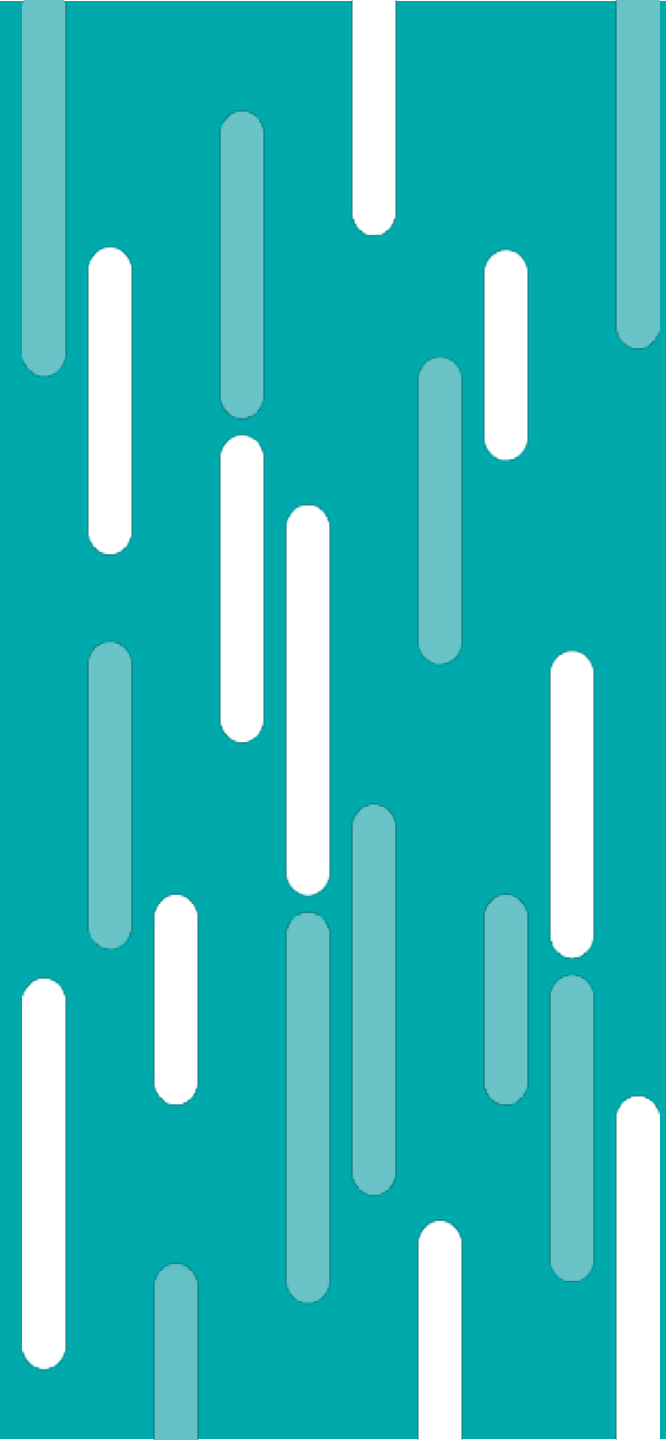
In addition to coding the narratives, we also used comparators to look for patterns, relationships and outliers within the data. Whilst a number of comparators did not reveal any notable correlation, we frequently used the institutional cluster information to provide a more detailed look at the data. We also looked for relationships between coding results and HEIs' self-scores to check for relationships between reporting and scoring.

Limitations of our approach

Given the scale of textual data included in KEF returns we were unable to conduct full reviews on all sections of the narratives. The combination of text searching, and full narrative reviews may have resulted in information being excluded in the analysis process. Using a systematic text searching approach should reduce the impact of this. However, it is only possible to provide commentary of the data coded through that process.

Whilst the narrative statements were created to provide an overview of each institution's approach to P&CE, it is worth noting the limitation of the dataset which has been curated and written in a specific context and is therefore not necessarily representative of the HEI P&CE sector more broadly. These are highly compressed accounts, presented as part of a new national assessment exercise in its first developmental year.

Chapter 1: The purpose and practice of public engagement





1. The purpose and practice of public engagement

Headlines

- HEIs most commonly justify their P&CE work through the lens of a civic responsibility to respond to societal needs and challenges.
- This civic responsibility is often framed through Civic University Agreements.
- The narratives prioritise a 'local' frame of reference for their P&CE, although HEIs are often engaging at local, regional, national and international scales.
- The dominant mode of engagement is through activities designed to 'inspire and inform', and the goal of sharing knowledge with publics is the most common approach.
- While much of the activity described is linked to forms of knowledge exchange, many HEIs also include activity that is focused on neighbourliness and social responsibility without a direct link to KE.
- Engaging with marginalised groups and tackling exclusion is a high priority for HEIs.

Overview of this section

This section draws on the Summary, Strategy and Activity sections of the P&CE statements to explore how HEIs understand and operationalise the **purpose and practice of public engagement**.

It looks at how they describe and frame their approach to PE, and their purposes for supporting it; at the policy drivers they prioritise; how they relate their engagement to their place / location; who they work with to achieve their goals; and the kinds of activities they foreground.

Lenses used in this section

- What are the aims and objectives of HEIs' P&CE?
- What policy drivers do HEIs foreground for their work?
- How do HEIs relate their engagement to their place / location?
- What kinds of activities do HEIs foreground?
- Which publics do HEIs work with?
- Who do HEIs work with to achieve their goals?

Lens 1.1 What are the aims and objectives of HEIs' P&CE?

In this section we summarise the types of goals that HEIs outlined to describe the difference they wanted to make through their P&CE activity, to provide an initial broad-brush orientation to describe some key differences in how HEIs frame the purposes of their P&CE work.

We began by analysing how HEIs describe their aims and objectives for P&CE. Later in this chapter, we focus on the types of activities that they describe, and the purposes of these.

Some institutions explicitly stated their aims and objectives, whilst for others the aims and objectives were implicit in how they described their strategic intent in the Strategy section of the P&CE narratives.

We focused in particular on the Strategy and Activity sections, and identified two different ways of articulating their intentions:

'Inward', to improve the internal culture, so that staff, students and publics were better supported to engage together effectively. We explore this further in the next chapter.

'Outward', to explain the types of social impact and approaches that they have prioritised. We found that these clustered into four broad approaches or 'frames', described on the right:

Framing the 'outward' facing purposes of P&CE

We expand on each of these frames on the next page.

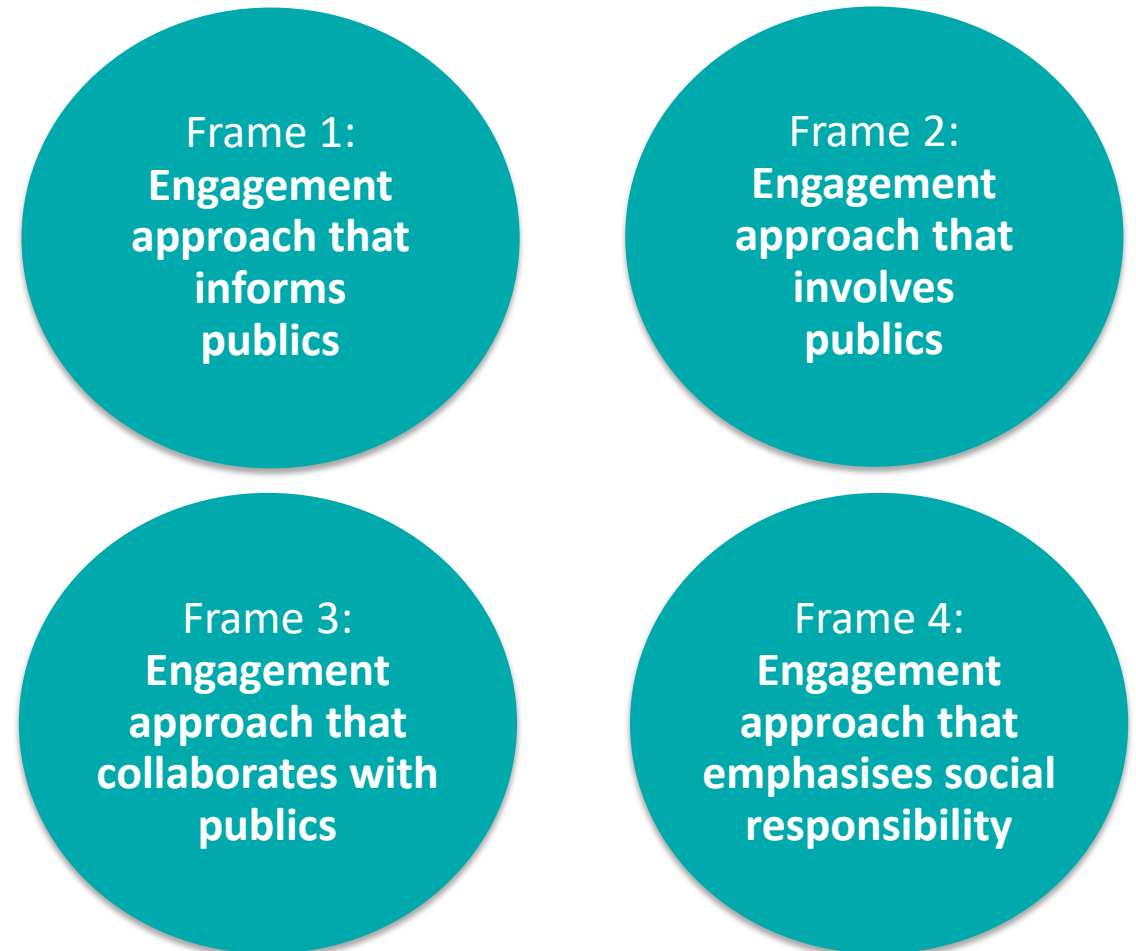


Figure 1: Framing the 'outward' facing purposes of P&CE



Lens 1.1 What are the aims and objectives of HEIs' P&CE?

Frame 1: Engagement approach that informs publics

This engagement approach emphasises communicating knowledge created within university settings with external audiences. There is some focus on consulting publics, however, this is usually to support the progress of academics and universities. In this approach publics are most often recipients of information and this is usually through quite broad-brush disseminative activities which did not have specific target audiences, for example, through radio appearances or media coverage. This approach had less of a geographical focus and engages publics locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Frame 2: Engagement approach that involves publics

In this approach there was more focus on active involvement of publics in the engagement. This was often motivated by creating public benefits through sharing research as well as a pedagogical focus on opening up access to, and increasing the quality of, learning opportunities. This approach was more often focused locally and regionally than nationally and internationally, and often delivered through more disseminative activities, such as open days, events and outreach.

Frame 3: Engagement approach that collaborates with publics

This engagement approach was commonly associated with a belief that people outside of HEIs understand the nuances of the challenges faced by society, and can be part of creating the solutions. In this approach engagement not only creates public benefit through participation and co-creation, but also increases the quality of the institution's academic processes, outputs and outcomes. What was distinct about this frame's geographical focus was that it was most often place-based, with clear contextualisation to the specific location and needs of the communities living there. Activities were usually locally or regionally focused, although there were some exemplary international projects employing this approach.

Frame 4: Engagement approach that emphasises social responsibility

This frame foregrounded social responsibility as the dominant motivation for P&CE, emphasising that HEIs should make contributions to their neighbouring communities and be responsive to their needs. This approach informed many of the P&CE narratives. This engagement approach was usually locally and regionally focused. It used the framing of 'being a good neighbour' to provide an overarching rationale for their approach to P&CE, and saw HEIs 'picking and mixing' from the different knowledge building modes, alongside their practical support for communities through, for instance, volunteering or offering reduced fee access to facilities.

Whilst these frames are helpful in summarising the emphasis of different engagement approaches foregrounded in the narrative statements, it is important to note that HEIs did not always sit neatly within one category. There were statements where the strategic approach spoke to more than one frame, or where the central strategy could be categorised under one frame, but the example projects might speak more clearly to another. We will continue to unpack these distinctions between central and project level approaches throughout this report.



Lens 1.1 What are the aims and objectives of HEIs' P&CE? cont.

Case study: defining aims and objectives

We looked at both the Strategy and Activity sections to identify specific ways in which HEIs defined the aims and objectives of their P&CE work.

Occasionally these were explicitly stated. The example below is **Oxford Brookes University**:

- *To work in collaboration with our communities through sustained and reciprocal engagement to foster a love of learning, to inspire the students and researchers of tomorrow, and to enable change and improve practice so that the University can better serve its publics.*
- *To work with professional and business communities to understand their needs and to develop better professional and business practice.*
- *To participate in civic and community forums as a fully engaged stakeholder in order to address the challenges and concerns affecting our communities.*
- *To enrich the life of society through the promotion and sponsorship of accessible and engaging cultural events and exhibitions.*

Some HEIs used the Activities section to categorise their work into broad thematic purposes. **Bath Spa University**, for example, identified four 'commitments' that focus their efforts:

- *A commitment to leveraging our creative expertise.*
- *A commitment to inclusive growth and social enterprise.*
- *An ally to business with focused support for the SME and micro business community.*
- *A deep network of governance and cultural organisations in which Bath Spa is an agile and collaborative partner.*





Lens 1.1 What are the aims and objectives of HEIs' P&CE? cont.

The four frames detailed in the previous section, were animated by the institutions' stated aims and objectives for C&PE. These are described below.

Table 2: Aims and objectives: definitions

Aims and objectives	
Share knowledge outwards	This aim focused on disseminating knowledge generated within the institution with external publics.
Respond to community needs and challenges	Institutions citing this aim were interested in working to support communities to overcome specific challenges. This aim involved listening to community needs to understand how the HEIs support change.
Foster learning	This aim was about supporting the leaning of publics outside of the institution. This aim involved working with a range of publics to build knowledge.
Improve lives through research	HEIs citing this aim were interested in conducting research that made a real-world impact on peoples' lives.
Increase access to HE	Institutions citing this aim were interested in increasing the scope and reach of HE, in particular, attracting prospective students from groups currently under-represented in HE.
Work with businesses	HEIs citing this aim often identified connections between their P&CE activity and their wider goals to contribute to economic development.
Involve public in research studies	This aim focused on bringing publics in to HEI research, for example through patient involvement.
Engage the public with research	Although similar to involving public in research, this aim was more focused on engaging publics with the findings of research rather than involving them in the research process.
Promote community university knowledge exchange	This aim focused on bi-directional knowledge sharing between universities and communities.
Contribute to national policy	HEIs referencing this aim sought to use their research to influence and inform national policy makers.
Offer accessible cultural events	Some HEIs identified an aim to increase the accessibility of the cultural events they offer.
Develop national and international research	This aim focused on building partnerships with other research focused institutions nationally and internationally. HEIs citing this aim were interested in working on international research, or widening the reach of their work.
Deliver engaged learning	This aim focused on creating more opportunities for students to engage with publics during their learning.



Lens 1.2 What policy drivers do HEIs foreground for their work?

Our review looked at how HEIs spoke about their work within the context of wider social and political policies. This is important because it provides insights into how institutions relate their P&CE to what is happening in the public sphere, and into political discourse around higher education.

Exploring the statements through policy drivers also highlights if HEIs are shaping their accounts of P&CE (for the purpose of the KEF) through priority political agendas.

The following policy frames are being used within the Strategy and Activity sections to describe the underpinning motivation for P&CE. We define the different framings on the next page:

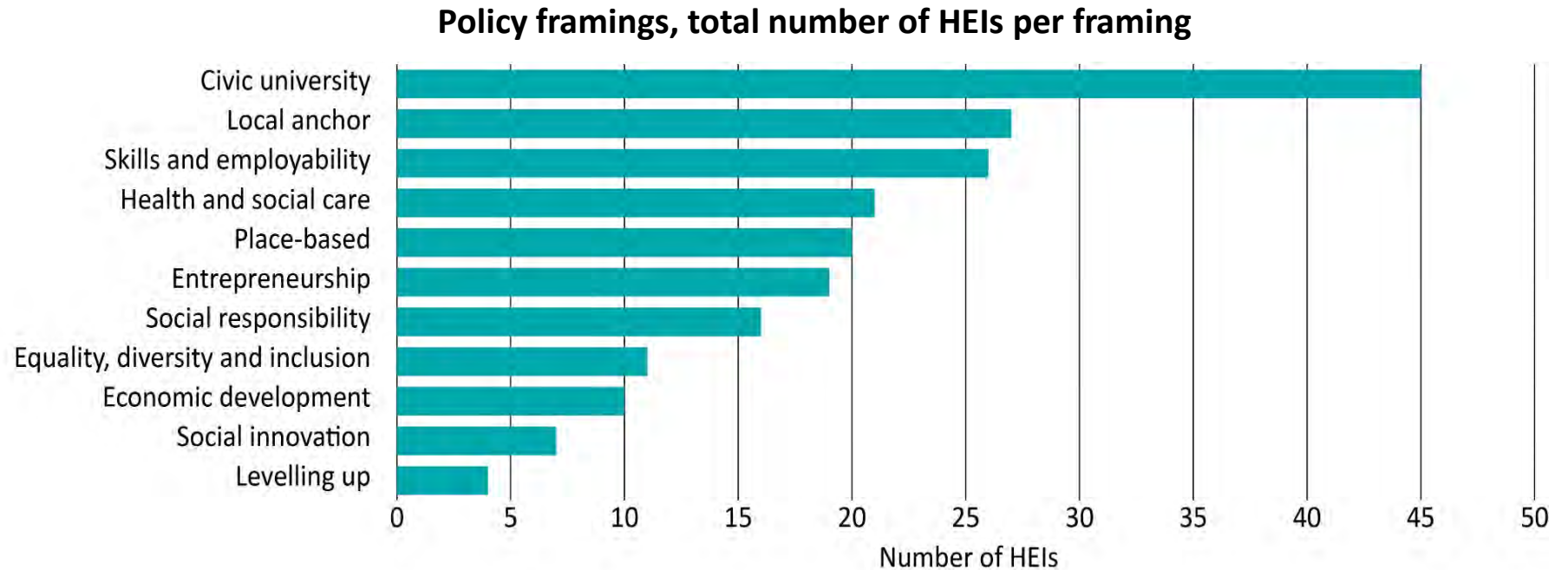


Figure 2: Policy framings

Skills and employability, health and social care, and place-based drivers feature clearly in the narrative statements, which is not surprising given their prominence in political discourse. Similarly, as more HEIs have embarked on creating Civic University Agreements, we expected to see a civic focus in the referenced strategic drivers.



Lens 1.2 What policy drivers do HEIs foreground for their work? cont.

Table 3: Policy framing definitions

Policy framings	
Civic university	HEIs identified their civic role and their commitment to civic engagement. This was often framed through Civic University Agreements and focused on building partnerships with external publics.
Local anchor	Being a local anchor was often referenced alongside being a civic university. This framing prioritised the position of the institution in their local and regional context. When institutions talked about being a local anchor, they were demonstrating awareness of the power and influence they hold within their region and the importance of using that to bring about positive change.
Skills and employability	Some HEIs used skills and employability as one lens to frame their work. This referred to upskilling people (most commonly students and local residents) in order to gain better employment, and to help build thriving communities.
Health and social care	This framing focused on conducting research and advising local and national policy makers on how to improve the quality and delivery of health and social care.
Place based	References to place-based framings included strategies, policies and partnerships which all focused on responding to local challenges and working with local communities. Responding to the local context was central to this framing.
Entrepreneurship	This framing focused on the HEI's role in enabling enterprise, usually local enterprise. Types of enabling included feeding research into specific enterprise disciplines (e.g., sustainability), or working specifically with local and regional social enterprises.
Social responsibility	Some HEIs used the framing of social responsibility to underpin their engagement work. Social responsibility was usually referenced when discussing why they worked in partnership with local communities.
Equality, diversity and inclusion	Equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) was often referenced when discussing the range of partners and publics with whom HEIs seek to engage. This framing was commonly focused on supporting existing local ED&I agendas, as well as ensuring HEI staff have a good level of ED&I literacy.
Economic development	This framing focused on boosting economic development. This was usually at a local or regional scale. HEIs referred to the importance of research in informing economic development and this was often facilitated through local authorities. HEIs often foregrounded 'inclusive' growth, or similar, to emphasise the importance of focusing on public and community needs and benefits from economic development.
Social innovation	Social innovation was referenced in two ways. Bringing in external partners to advise HEIs on their social innovation strategies, and HEI researchers advising local governments on their social innovation agendas.
Levelling up	HEIs who referenced levelling up were using this framing to inform their strategic priorities and to align themselves with central government agendas. Levelling up was referenced as a way of increasing engagement with social challenges.



Lens 1.2 What policy drivers do HEIs foreground for their work? cont.

A widespread focus on place and civic engagement

A **civic focus** was most commonly referenced policy driver in the statements with 44 out of 117 HEIs referring at least once to either civic agreements or civic agendas in their narratives. However, given that the civic agenda and the commitments to write civic agreements is relatively recent (the first civic agreement was published in July 2020 by the two Nottingham Universities), this iteration of the KEF provided little detail on how a civic focus was shaping the institutional approach towards P&CE.

There were some examples of HEIs using civic agreements to ensure they met their social responsibility: for example, by positioning staff on senior external boards. A smaller collection of institutions mentioned using civic agreements to respond to local issues, for example, tackling economic deprivation – although there was limited evidence in these KEF narratives of how civic agreements specifically enabled this.

We identified two other **place-focused terms** (Local Anchor and Place-based), and **65 HEIs** in total used at least one of these terms in defining their strategic objectives for P&CE.

Case study: connections to place

Arts University Bournemouth also demonstrated a strong connection to its place and the mutual benefits of working with partners in their region. Their narrative identifies how they are: *‘a creative community dedicated to working with our local creative and business community in the development of the arts, skills and access to experiences’* who can provide *‘a strong anchor to the local community that enriches and supports our civic function’*.

Plymouth College of Arts highlight their *‘strong sense of place and civic mission’*. Their narrative describes a range of activities they use to engage their publics including, through their contemporary arts programme, by opening up facilities to the public, supporting the work of charities, and being part of the global ‘Fab City’ initiative.

Birmingham City University was a good example of a university making strong and explicit connections between its P&CE strategy and its place-based commitments. Their 2016-2020 Strategic Plan stated a dual commitment to *‘transforming Birmingham and the Region’* and *‘transforming student’s lives’*. The current 2025 Strategy continues this strategic focus with a mission to be the *‘University for Birmingham’*, reflecting its role as both an anchor institution in Birmingham and the wider West Midlands, but also as a civic university.

Public and Community Engagement (PCE) is central to this place-based approach, with aligned priorities articulated in the 2025 Strategy, including:

- Improving the breadth and depth of social, community and cultural engagement;
- Widening access to the University and its resources;
- Having a physical presence (beyond its campuses) in at least three areas of the city which suffer from high disadvantage;
- Supporting staff and students to undertake voluntary work in the community.





Lens 1.2 What policy drivers do HEIs foreground for their work? cont.

Skills and employability

Skills and employability featured in 26 of the P&CE statements. This category included drivers relating to students as well as external publics. Out of the 26 institutions who cited skills and employability drivers, 23 discussed them in the context of their student cohorts whilst only six institutions spoke about them in the context of external publics. Student skills and employability focus on building their capacity in order to prepare them for the transition into employment. More interestingly, a small collection of references to student skills and employability identified the value of retaining students within the local economy by building skills in line with local employability opportunities and skills gaps. The six institutions who cited skills and employability of external publics focused on upskilling local residents and communities.

The rationale for focusing on skills and employment relates to the commitment many HEIs expressed to support thriving, cohesive communities in their location. Nottingham Trent University expressed this as *'providing education and skills as a route to social inclusion within and beyond our hinterland'*.

Case study: skills and employability

Newman University highlights how it has made significant financial and resource investments into a new Employability Hub which aims to better support relationships between students, staff, employers and Local Enterprise Partnerships. This Employability Hub underpins the institutions strategic aim to 'support staff and students to develop successful social ventures and enterprise in partnership with others'

University of Leicester identifies how their involvement in the REACH partnership has supported the *'progression of under-represented groups into Higher Education locally'* and provided careers and employability support to City Council staff.





Lens 1.2 What policy drivers do HEIs foreground for their work? cont.

Our review also looked at the distribution of policy drivers across the clusters.

Cluster breakdown

Clusters V, E, X and J had the highest percentage of HEIs citing a civic focus. Clusters M and J referenced the broadest range of policy drivers in the Strategy sections of the P&CE narratives. Cluster M institutions referred to a civic focus, being a local anchor organisation and skills and employability, whilst Cluster J institutions foreground a civic focus, health and social care. The STEM cluster tended not to foreground policy drivers when framing their P&CE strategy.

Civic and social responsibility drivers are most prevalent in the broader based HEIs and less so in the specialist Arts and STEM clusters. Finally, levelling up was relatively rarely referenced across any of the clusters.

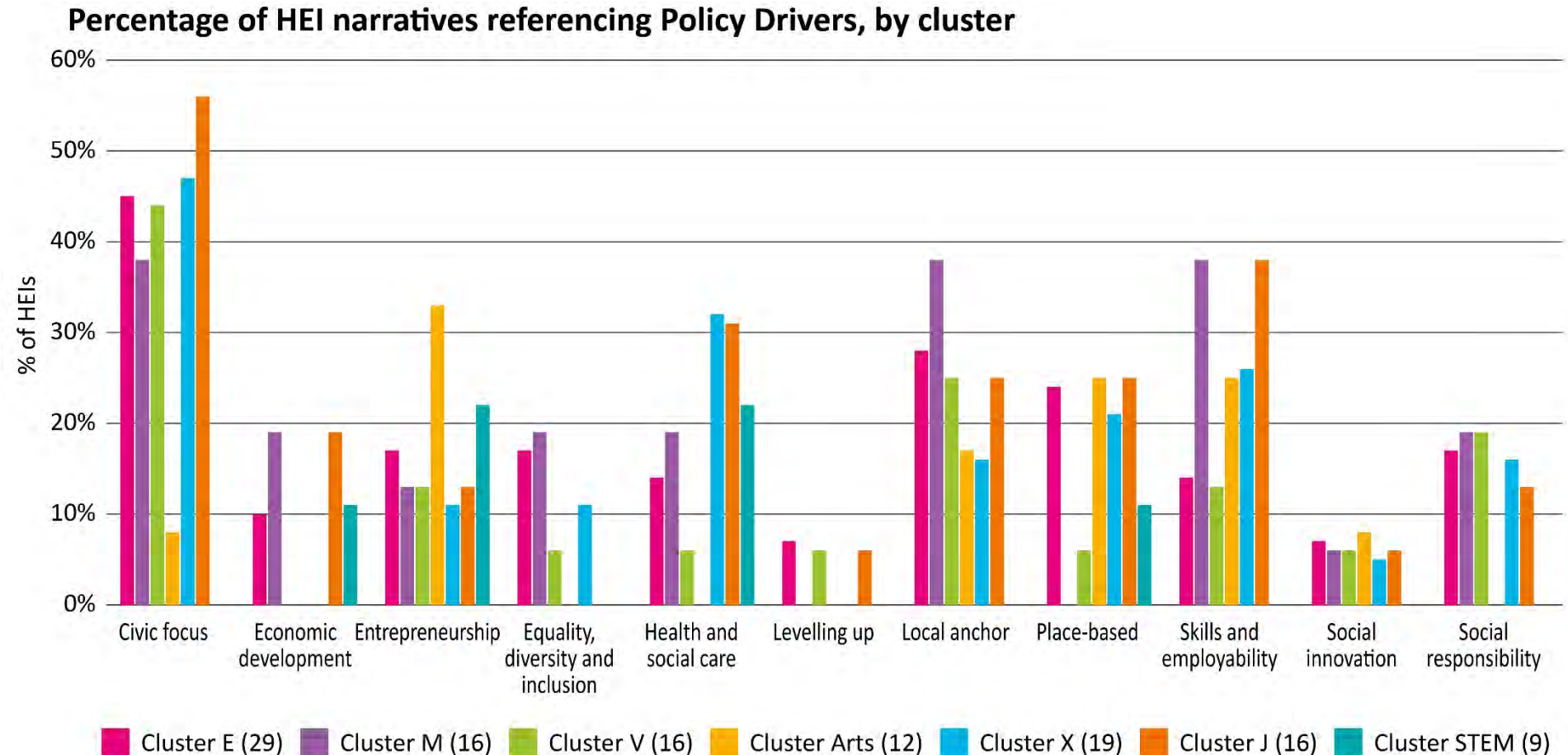


Figure 3: Policy framings by cluster



Lens 1.3 How do HEIs relate their engagement to their place / location?

In order to explore how HEIs relate their engagement to their place and/or location we looked at both the Institutional Context (IC) and P&CE narratives.

The IC narratives provide contextual information about the institution, including in many cases the relationship between the institution and its geographical location.

Similarly, across the P&CE narratives HEIs include detail about how they relate to their locality.

We analysed the IC and P&CE narratives, coding HEIs that referenced each of these framings at least once. All 117 HEIs referred to their geographical focus.

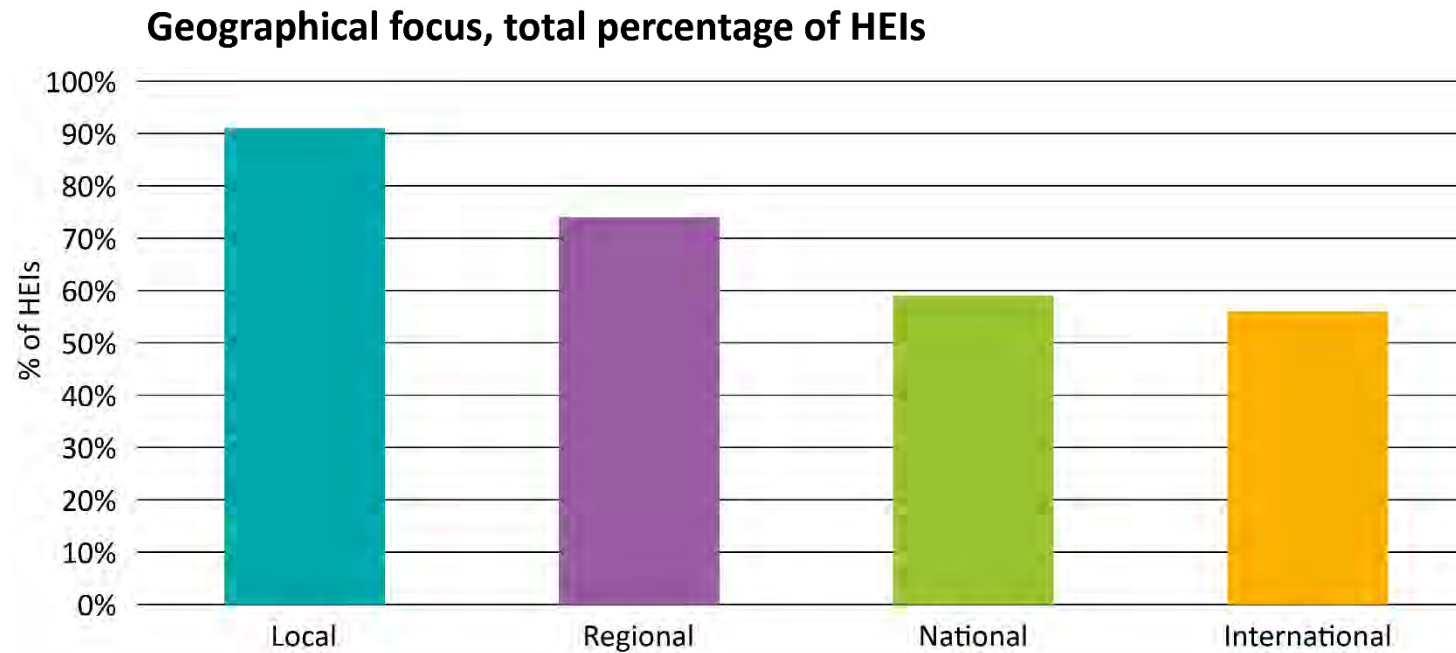


Figure 4: Geographical focus

91% of HEIs cited a local focus in their IC and P&CE statements, 74% regional, 59% national, and 56% international.



Lens 1.3 How do HEIs relate their engagement to their place / location? cont.

Table 4: Geographical framing: definitions

Geographical framings	
Local	HEIs referred to local geographies in their narratives. This included working at a city scale, but also at a hyper-local scale such as at local authority ward level.
Regional	HEI references to regional framings were not always explicit in their geographical boundaries and it is not clear if HEIs draw on the government identified regions. However, some HEIs did draw distinctions between their local focus and a regional focus, highlighting that regional working included more diverse geographies e.g. urban and rural.
National	National framings referred to either England or devolved nations.
International	HEIs who discussed their international work were referring to engagement conducted outside of the UK.

In setting out their local and regional focus, HEIs identified tangible motivations that clearly aligned with the aims and objectives documented in section one of this chapter: for example, overcoming inequalities in their locality, encouraging learning and curiosity, and supporting business growth at a local and regional scale.

Additionally, some HEIs discussed their local and regional relationships through the lens of furthering their own research and teaching agendas. These institutions highlighted how a connection to their locality enriches their work. HEIs most commonly referenced how these connections lead to enriched learning opportunities for

students and improved curricula; however, there was also some mention of how local and regional connections enriched the quality of the institution's research through a more bi-directional flow of knowledge.

The dominant framing for P&CE was in terms of its local and regional impact. When HEIs referenced the international, this tended to be done when they were setting the broad context for their approach to KE, and skewed towards ambitions to support economic growth and entrepreneurship: for example, working with businesses within international eco-systems, working

alongside national and international enterprise, and training graduates for the national and international economy.

Where an international focus for P&CE activity was made explicit tended to be in health and international development disciplines, where the communities engaged with are often outside the UK. Institutions with a focus on international health provided clear examples of their international P&CE work: for example, feeding knowledge into global decision-making spaces in order to inform policy, or working with communities in East and West Africa to respond to epidemics.



Lens 1.3 How do HEIs relate their engagement to their place / location? cont.

We were interested to explore whether the geographical focus varied across the different clusters.

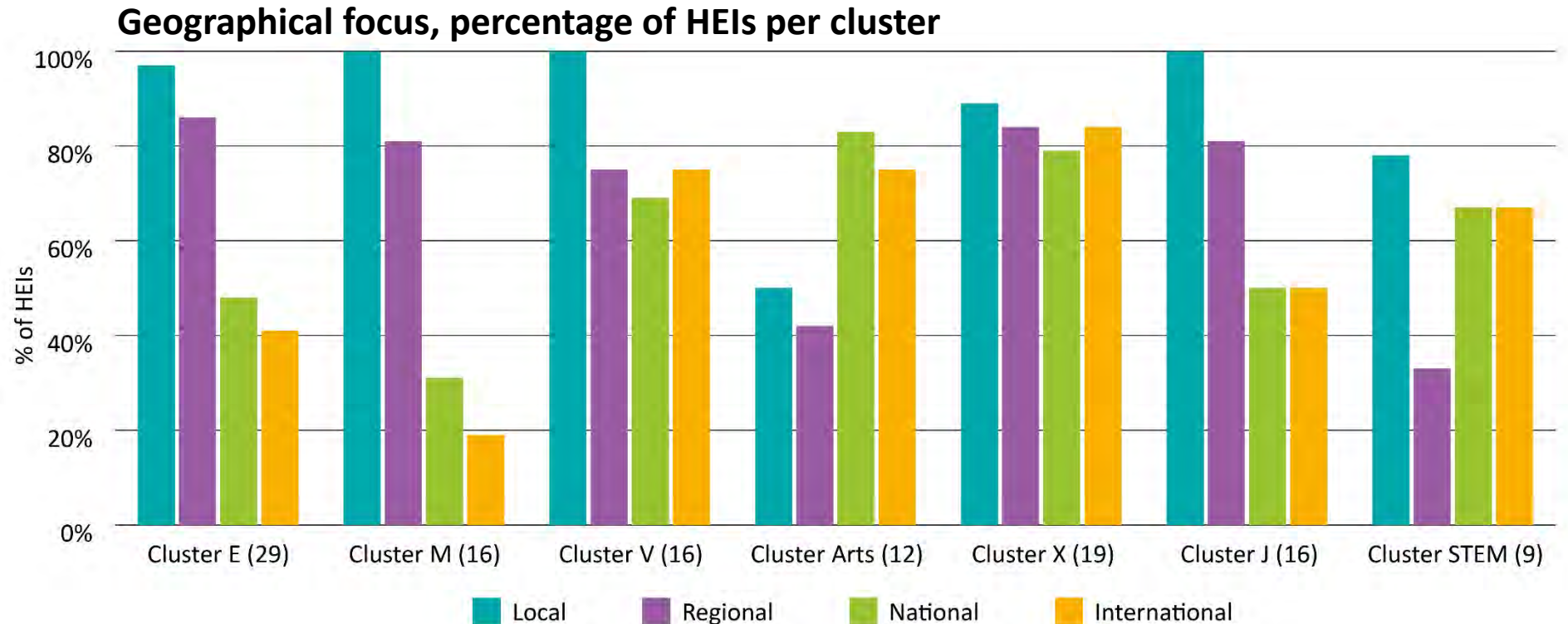


Figure 5: Geographical focus by cluster

When looking at the geographical focus in the P&CE narratives we were struck by how important the 'local' is in framing the sector's approach to P&CE. This reinforces the focus on civic and place-based policy drivers set out in the previous section. It is evident that P&CE is increasingly being positioned as a key mechanism by which universities can deliver on the place agenda. It will be interesting to compare this finding when we undertake a similar analysis of the 2021 REF impact case studies, to explore the extent to which the public engagement described in the REF case studies is also focused locally.

Cluster breakdown

As we might expect Cluster M, including smaller teaching institutions, was less focused on national and international engagement, whilst the large research-intensive institutions (Cluster X) had a more even distribution across the geographical scale. The Arts cluster HEIs framed their work as more national and international in reach, than local and regional.



Lens 1.4 What kinds of activities do HEIs foreground?

As part of our review we examined what activities HEIs chose to foreground in their P&CE statements. The following graph shows the total number of HEIs referencing each activity.

We describe the activities on the next page.

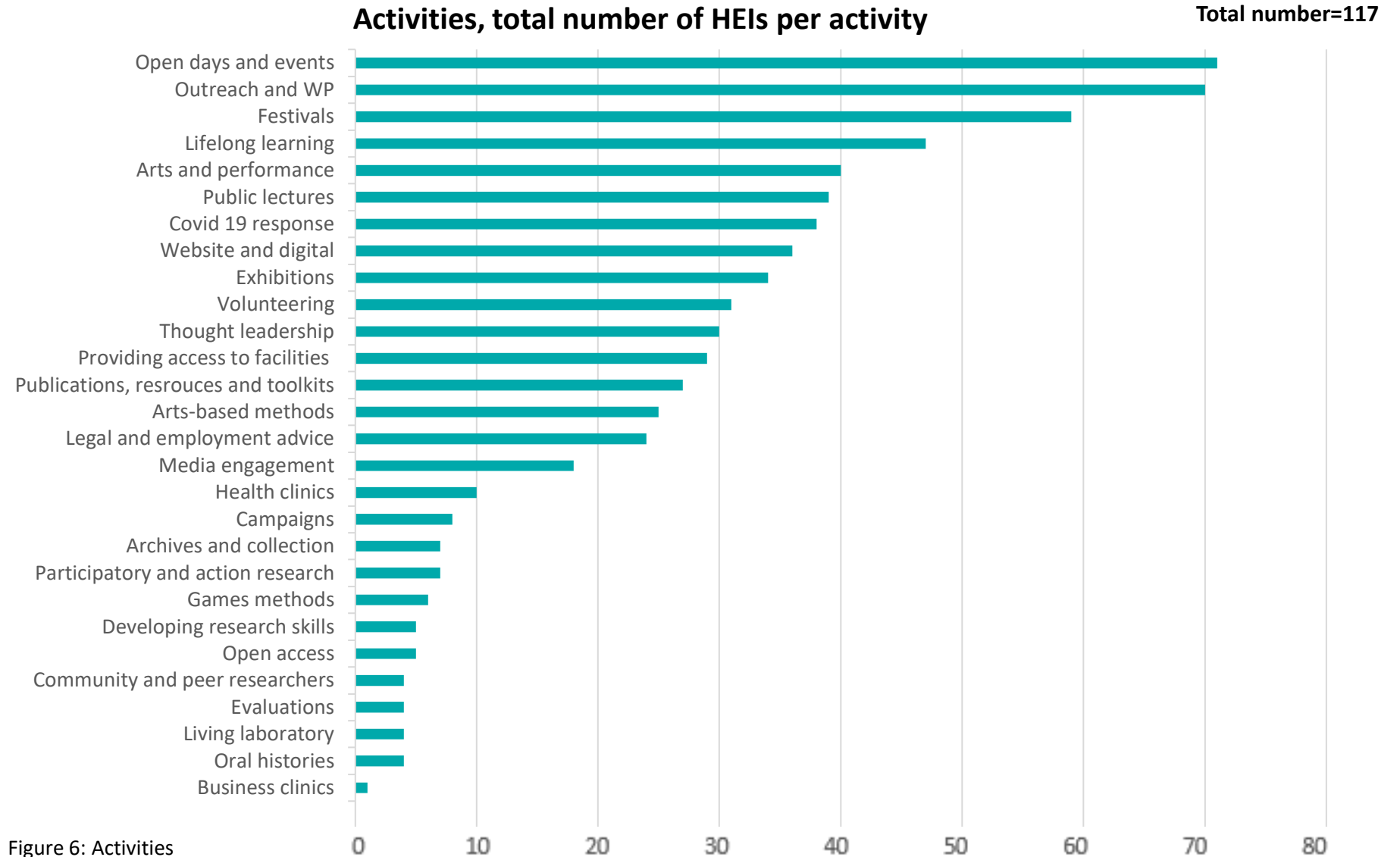


Figure 6: Activities



Lens 1.4 What kinds of activities do HEIs foreground? cont.

Table 5: Activities: definitions

Activities			
Open days & events	Activities to welcome communities onto campus.	Legal & employment advice	Clinics or drop ins to provide community access to expert legal and employment advice.
Outreach and WP	Facilitating access to HE from under-represented groups.	Media engagement	Interaction through radio and TV.
Festivals	Using festivals to create engagement opportunities.	Health clinics	Clinics to provide community access to expert advice.
Lifelong learning	Providing learning opportunities for adults.	Campaigns	Engaging communities in campaigns to effect social change.
Arts and performance	Engaging publics in arts and cultural experiences.	Archives & collections	Provision of archive resources for public use.
Public lectures	Lectures targeting a public audience.	Participatory action research	Actively involving publics in the development and delivery of action research.
Covid 19 response	Opening up space for vaccination centres or to make PPE etc.	Games methods	Using gaming/VR technology to engage people.
Website and digital	Engaging via the web and social media.	Developing research skills	Providing opportunities for the public to find out how research 'works' and to develop their skills.
Exhibitions	Developing exhibits inside and outside HE.	Open access	Efforts to open up access to research outputs.
Volunteering	Provision of opportunities to volunteer in community settings.	Community & peer researchers	Providing training and support for communities to act as researchers.
Thought leadership	Efforts to contribute to & influence public discourse & debate.	Evaluations	Carrying out evaluations, e.g., evaluating service provisions for local authorities.
Access to facilities	Opening up facilities for community use.	Living Laboratory	User-centred open innovation projects.
Publications, resources, toolkits	Producing knowledge-based resources for public use.	Oral history	Opportunities to contribute to oral history projects.
Arts-based methods	Using participatory techniques developed in the arts.	Business clinics	Community access to expert business advice.



Lens 1.4 What kinds of activities do HEIs foreground? cont.

We found it helpful to cluster the 28 activities into four categories, represented in this diagram.

Three of the approaches were focused on different approaches to engaging people with knowledge – from Sharing Knowledge (e.g., open days) to Building Knowledge Together (e.g., participatory research).

The fourth approach was not focused on knowledge building, but on what we called ‘being a good neighbour’, for instance, providing access to facilities.

We describe each category on the next slide and then show the frequency with which they were mentioned.

Categorising approaches to P&CE activity in the KEF narratives

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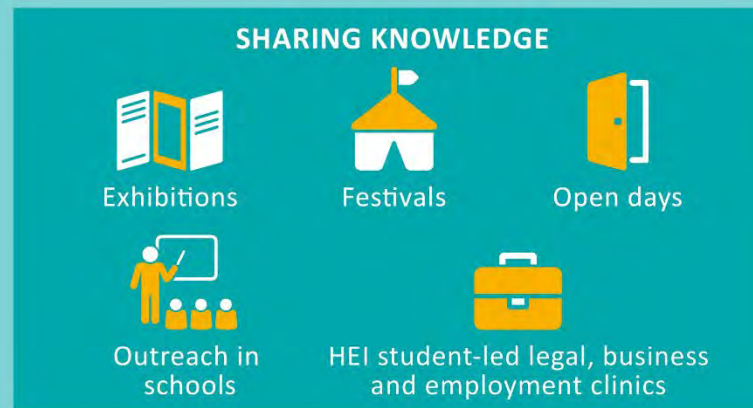
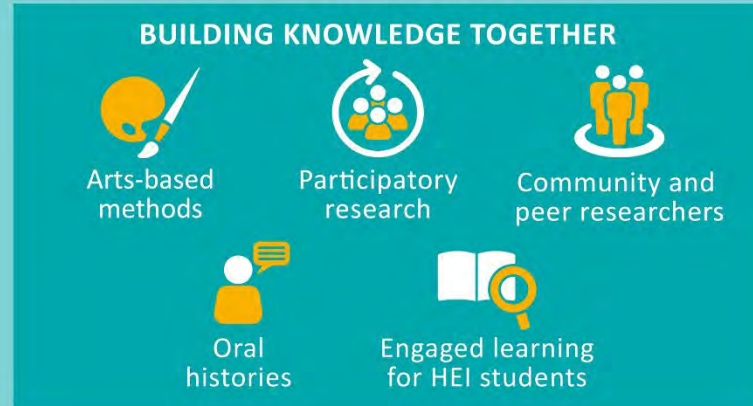


Figure 7: Categorising P&CE activities



Lens 1.4 What kinds of activities do HEIs foreground? cont.

Unsurprisingly, the categories of activities (in the table on the right) reflect the four framings of institutional aims and objectives, described in Lens 1.1.

Framing the purposes of P&CE

Categorising P&CE activities

Table 6: P&CE activities: definitions

Categorising P&CE activities	
Providing access to knowledge	<p>This quadrant focused on putting information into the public realm for people to engage with. These activities were more passive than ‘sharing knowledge’ activities in that resources and were usually uploaded in a virtual space, open to anyone who chose to access them. These activities brought the benefit of being able to be accessed at any time; however, they also risked not engaging the intended participants or audiences.</p> <p>This category aligns strongly with the ‘Informs publics’ framing of P&CE.</p>
Sharing knowledge	<p>This quadrant included more disseminative activities focused on imparting knowledge. Within the narratives, this knowledge was almost always created within the university (academic) realm, and shared with external, non-academic publics.</p> <p>This category overlaps with the ‘Informs’ and ‘Involves publics’ framings of P&CE.</p>
Building knowledge together	<p>This quadrant focused on collaborating with public/non-academic partners to create knowledge together. Activities grouped under this category challenged who holds knowledge, and what we understand as knowledge. These HEIs foreground the value of other knowledge, and seek to work in partnership to create knowledge together. They also emphasise the importance of engagement as a means of increasing the responsiveness of their work to local community needs and interests.</p> <p>This category aligns strongly with the ‘Collaborates with publics’ framing of P&CE.</p>
Being a good neighbour	<p>This quadrant foregrounds HEIs’ social responsibility to support geographically local communities. This was particularly relevant to the Covid-19 response detailed in some narratives. The emphasis in this approach was on providing support to communities (for instance through provision of equipment or volunteers), not on the process of building or sharing knowledge.</p> <p>This category aligns strongly with the ‘social responsibility’ framing of P&CE.</p>

Frame: Engagement approach that informs publics

Frame: Engagement approach that involves publics

Frame: Engagement approach that collaborates with publics

Frame: Engagement approach that emphasises social responsibility



Lens 1.4 What kinds of activities do HEIs foreground? cont.

We looked across the statements at the distribution of these different knowledge approaches.

It is striking that 79% of the reported activities could be characterised as ‘inspiring and informing the public’ – through sharing and providing access to knowledge.

Distribution of activities across knowledge based framework, percentage of total activities

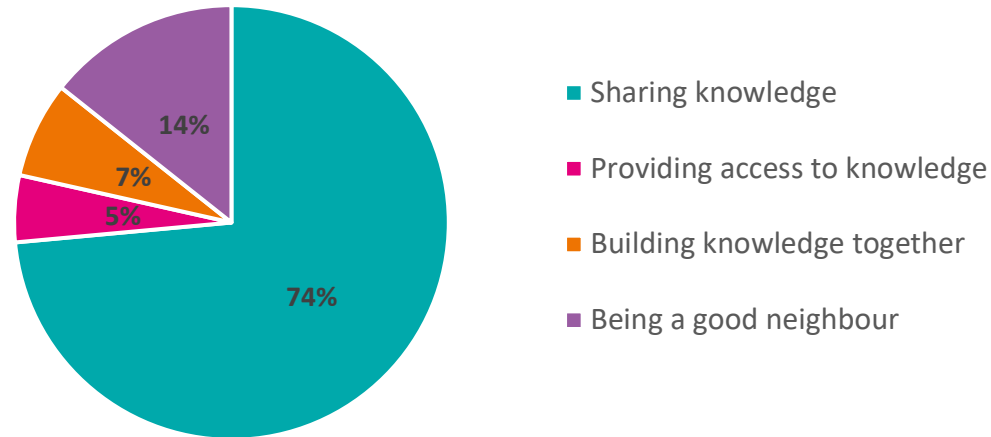


Figure 8: Knowledge approach

Cluster breakdown

Clusters X, M and the STEM cluster were most represented across the ‘sharing knowledge’ approaches. We would expect STEM cluster HEIs to be engaging more with sharing knowledge approaches given the strong tradition of outreach style activities in STEM, with a focus on inspiring and informing publics, encouraging curiosity, and raising aspiration. Whilst there are also lots of examples of more collaborative style activities (for example, citizen science), there are fewer opportunities for publics to co-create research. It was therefore unsurprising that the STEM cluster was also most frequently linked to the ‘providing access to knowledge’ approach.

Clusters X and J were most commonly associated with the ‘building knowledge together’ approaches. This reflects the clusters that also carried out the most co-created and collaborative activities. Within the different knowledge approaches there were a collection of activities that focused specifically on ‘student knowledge building’- these include the legal, health and businesses clinics, and engaged learning. Out of the clusters who cited ‘student knowledge building’, Clusters E and J were most represented.

Sharing knowledge was the most commonly cited approach, making up 74% of all activities referenced in the narratives.

Providing access to knowledge accounted for 5% of all activities referenced in the narratives.

Building knowledge together made up 7% of the coded activities.

Being a good neighbour accounted for 14%.



Lens 1.4 What kinds of activities do HEIs foreground? cont.

The next eight slides provide examples for each category of activity, how they are distributed across the clusters, and some case studies of each approach.

Providing access to knowledge

We also identified a category of activities which were similar but distinct from the ‘sharing knowledge’ activity. These activities were also more disseminative in nature, but they were dependent on members of the public actively choosing to engage: for example, by visiting a web page or downloading a resource.

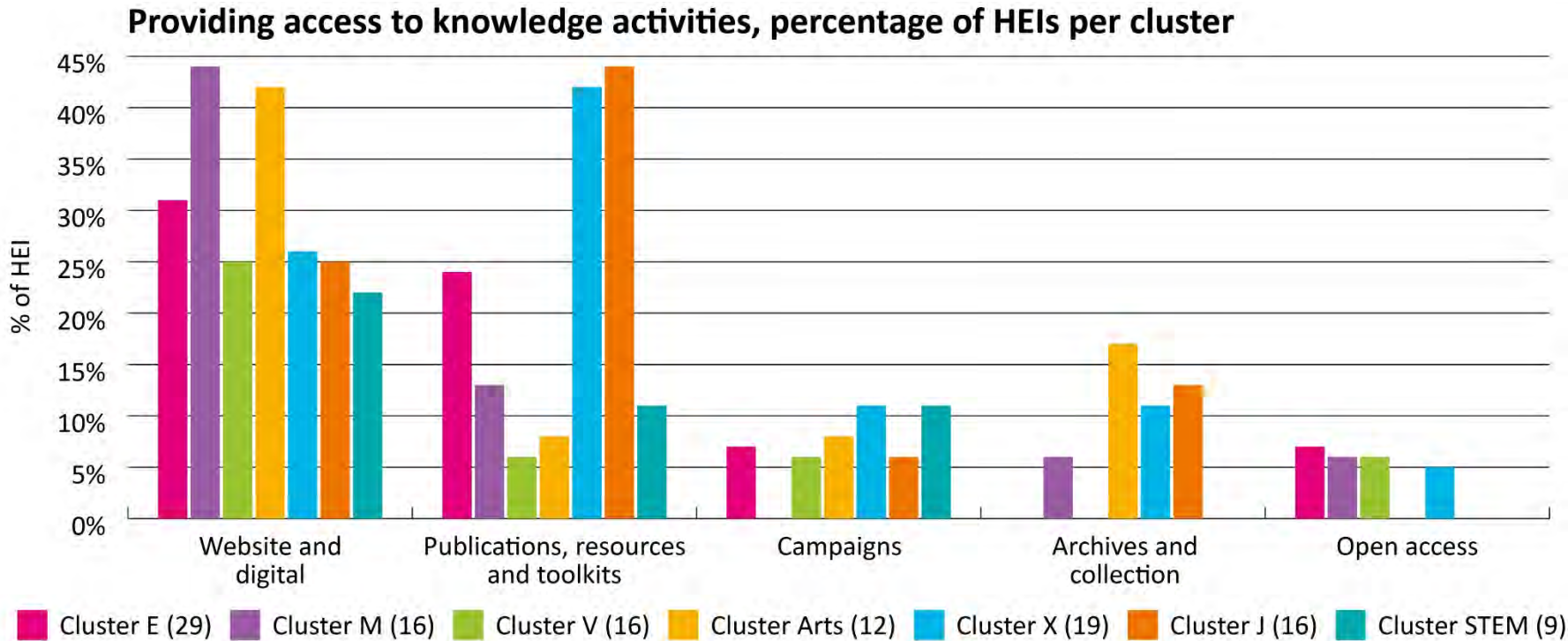


Figure 9: Providing access to knowledge activities

Case study: providing access to knowledge

Brunei University London describe how they ‘provided access to knowledge’ through their contribution to ‘The Conversation’, an independent news source that publishes articles on academic research targeted at members of the public.

The University of Nottingham highlights its ‘The Right Track’ podcast focusing on human rights, which has 50 episodes and over 17,000 downloads. The podcast engages a range of academics involved in human rights research and targets public audiences.





Lens 1.4 What kinds of activities do HEIs foreground? cont.

Sharing knowledge activities, percentage of HEIs per cluster

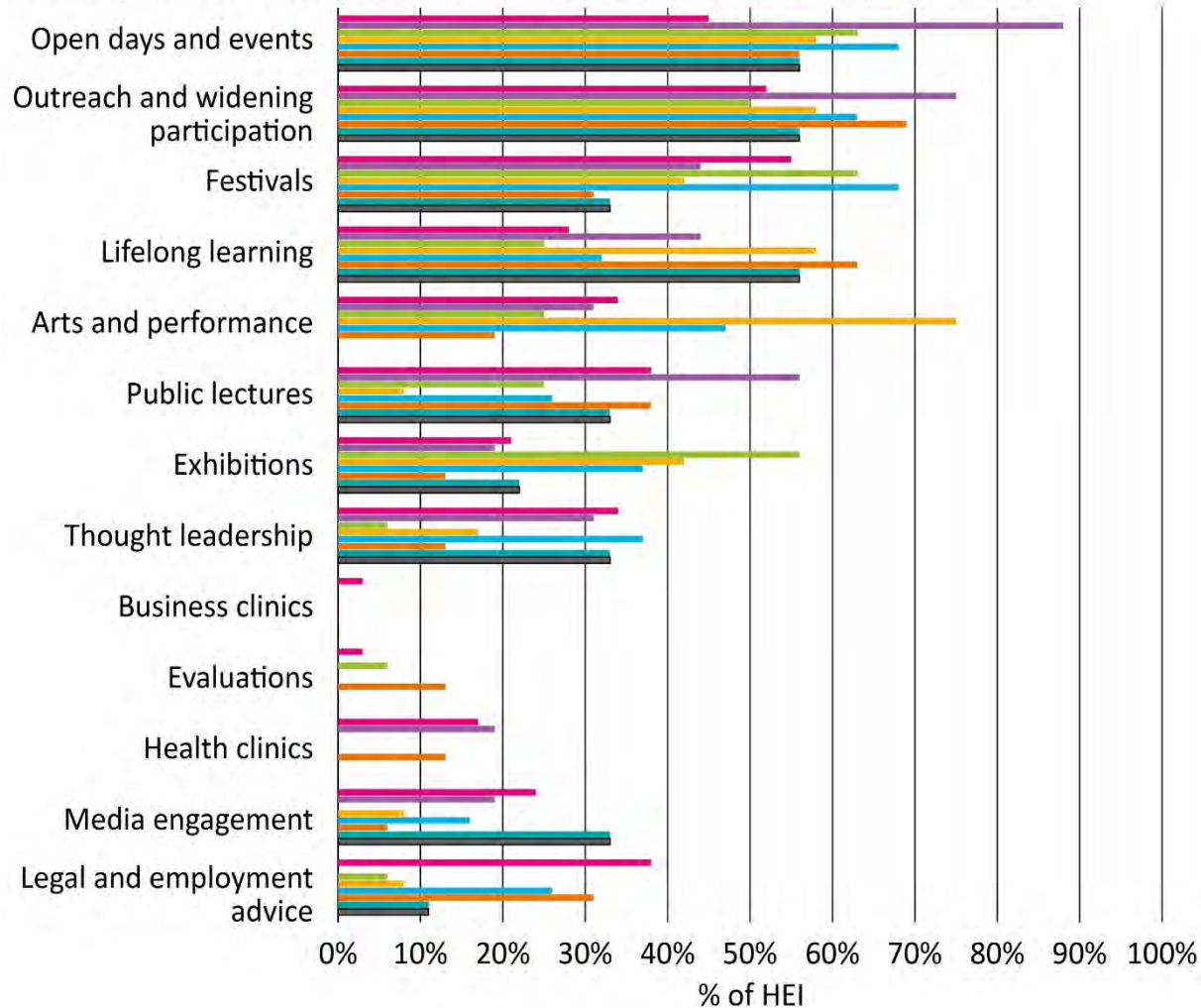


Figure 10: Sharing knowledge activities

Drilling into the detail of the types of activities HEIs were undertaking reveals a strong bias towards activities which could be categorised as ‘sharing knowledge’, such as open days, outreach and widening participation, festivals, lifelong learning, and arts and performance. This was expected. The [NCCPE’s review of the 2014 REF Impact Case Studies](#) found:

‘Public engagement is nearly always focussed on changes to understanding and awareness. [] Many researchers default to a paradigm of public engagement as ‘dissemination’. [] The public are most often framed as an ‘audience’ for research findings, rather than as experts in their own right or as active participants in the process’ (NCCPE, 2014, p.8).

Additionally, the scale and reach of these types of activities are routinely captured by HEIs making it easier for institutions to evidence and monitor their value. Some of these types of activities had clear objectives and demonstrated awareness of conditions that might increase inclusion, such as selecting venues that would attract more diverse audiences, targeting specific communities with advertising, and engaging intermediary organisations as a way of attracting visitors from diverse demographics. However, other activities had less clear objectives and HEIs did not provide detail about how they sought to engage people with them.

Cluster breakdown

Clusters E, M and J were well represented across the range of Knowledge Sharing activities. Cluster E institutions spoke to each of the 13 activities. STEM HEIs were most represented in the Open days and events, Outreach and widening participation, and Lifelong learning activities. Cluster V HEIs made the most references to Open days and Events, Outreach, and Public lectures. The Arts Cluster HEIs commonly referenced Outreach and widening participation, Open days and Events, and Arts and Performance in their narratives.





Lens 1.4 What kinds of activities do HEIs foreground? cont.

Case study: sharing knowledge

Activities focused on 'sharing knowledge' were by far the most commonly cited, and there were a range of examples that exemplified the scope for meaningful engagement through this mode of interaction:

- **Buckinghamshire New University's** National Disability Art Collection and Archive (NDACA) was an example of disseminative activities which initiate important conversations around issues of social justice. NDACA tells a story of Britain's disability arts movement.

The project features over 3500 artworks, which showcase the struggle for disability rights in the UK. The archives draw on the work of many different disability artists and activists to share knowledge and lived experiences as well as provide resources to broaden understanding of the disability arts movement.

Both of these examples showcase how knowledge can be shared with audiences outside HEIs in ways that uncover unknown histories or feed into important dialogues on equality and social justice.

- **Hertfordshire University's** Sparks Might Fly initiative involved academics and theatre companies working in collaborations to find new ways of making research accessible.

An example project involved a theatre company working with researchers to tell the lesser told stories of life during the First World War. The show toured schools and colleges within the region.





Lens 1.4 What kinds of activities do HEIs foreground? cont.

Sharing knowledge: knowledge clinics

A collection of 'inspire and inform' activities focused on smaller group or individual interactions. These included legal and employment, and health and business clinics, where HEI students and staff share knowledge with members of the public. Clinic activities featured most in Cluster E, X and J. Cluster E institutions frequently referenced Legal and employment, and health and business clinics as part of the engagement activities, whilst HEIs in Clusters X and J focused more of their legal and employment, and health clinic activity, rather than on business clinics. Whilst these activities are referenced less frequently than activities such as open days and events, the narratives included some useful examples.

Case study: knowledge clinics

The narrative examples outlined how HEIs used clinics to support student learning, whilst also serving a civic function in providing an affordable service to local communities. There were a couple of particularly notable examples that we felt really captured the dual purpose of these activities:

- **Northumbria University** presented an interesting example of how their law clinic is impacting on local communities. Their narrative describes how the university has worked with key local partners, e.g., the Maya Angelou Centre, to develop a legal advice clinic aimed specifically at marginalised and/or vulnerable women in North East England. The statement identified how this clinic provides a key regional resource to a community in particular need.
- **City University** of London highlighted how their legal clinics enable students to get real life legal practice experience, whilst also providing a pro-bono service to the local community. This activity is run in partnership by academics and practicing lawyers.





Lens 1.4 What kinds of activities do HEIs foreground? cont.

A smaller, but well documented set of co-created, collaborative activities focused more on participatory and reciprocal engagement with the public.

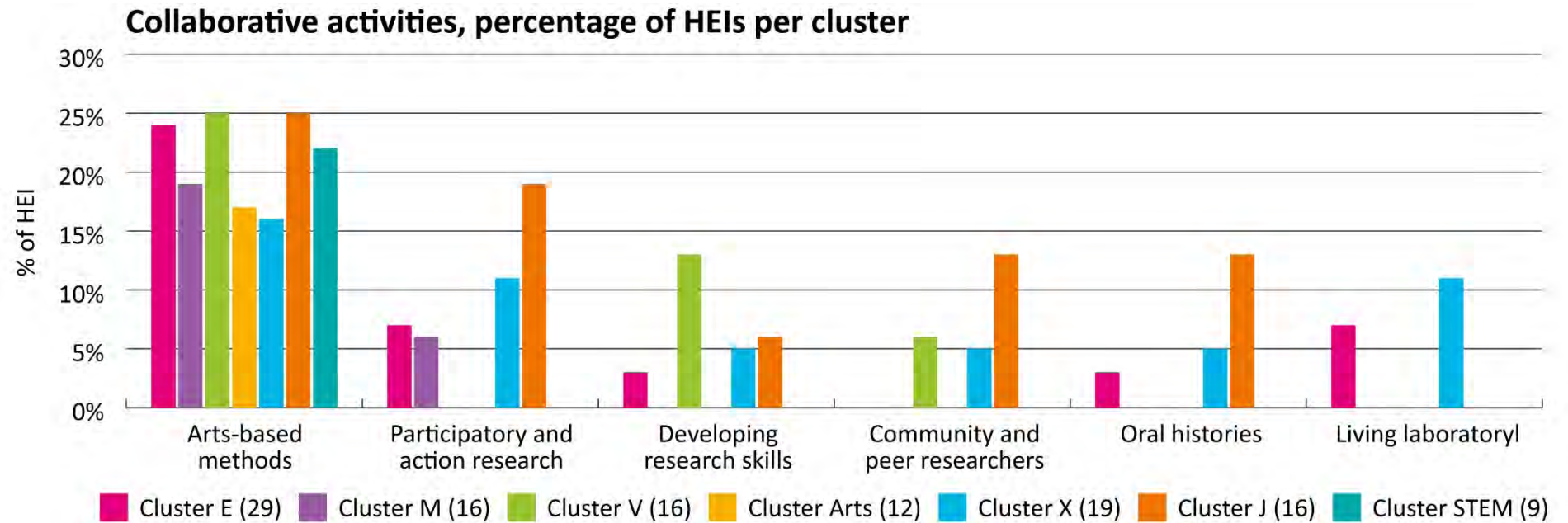


Figure 11: Collaborative activities

Cluster breakdown

Clusters J and X were particularly well represented across the co-created/collaborative activities. Cluster J and X HEIs reported using arts-based methods, community and peer researchers, oral history methods, and participatory and action research methodologies. Living laboratory activities were also cited by a small percentage (10%) of Cluster X HEIs. Cluster V institutions were represented in both the use of arts-based methods and activities that build research skills in non-academic audiences.

It is worth noting that there is something of a blurred line between P&CE and established participatory research methodologies (e.g., in arts based practice) where active community involvement is embedded in the approach. This might have resulted in some collaborative, engaged work not being captured in the submitted narratives.



Lens 1.4 What kinds of activities do HEIs foreground? cont.

Here we share some snapshots of three types of collaborative approaches referenced in the narratives.

Arts-based methods

Art-based methods were the most commonly referenced collaborative activity, featuring in narrative statements from all clusters. When looking in detail at the use of arts-based methods there are a small number of references to where this method has been selected specifically because the project involves artists or groups where an arts medium aligns with their existing activities e.g., craft heritage communities: however, in the majority of statements, arts-based methods have been selected because of the opportunity they provide for in-depth exploration of a particular topic.

Participatory approaches

Activities carried out under a participatory and/or action research approach were diverse, ranging from working in partnership with local SMEs or community organisations to scale-up or refresh their operations, through to supporting physical and mental health interventions in older people.

Developing Research skills

Whilst only representing a small percentage of the overall activities, 'developing research skills' was an interesting category to see emerging in some of the statements. These activities were focused on building research capacity in non-academic settings and did not necessarily lead to the co-production of new knowledge with the institution. One example involved an HEI working with Yazidi youths from refugee camps in North Iraq to develop documentary film-making skills and to preserve heritage and memories (Liverpool). Another involved collaboration between volunteers and researchers to digitally curate a theatre's history (Nottingham).



Lens 1.4 What kinds of activities do HEIs foreground? cont.

Case study: arts-based and participatory practice

There were some inspiring accounts of HEIs using art-based methods to engage publics and communities in co-created ways. We have included a few examples below which we think demonstrate innovative and creative approaches to arts-based engagement:

- **Bournemouth University's** 'Jumping in: Transgender and non-binary swimming' used drawing as part of a methodology to explore transgender and non-binary peoples' experiences of swimming. The project produced creative outputs which have been exhibited across multiple venues to raise awareness around the stories of transgender and non-binary people, which can sometimes be overlooked within LGBT awareness raising activity.
- **Liverpool John Moores University** showcased their 'War Widows Stories' project which worked with 136 war widows to develop an open access archive of lived experience stories. Through a participatory action research approach people shared their experiences of the loss of loved ones during service, documented in the creation of a large quilt, as well as written and recorded stories.
- **The University of Bradford's** 'Building Resilience Through Heritage' project uses virtual reality technology to support Syrian refugees in Jordan to connect with their homeland. Participants collaborated with university researchers to capture ideas around Syrian heritage. The university delivered the VR outputs at festivals in two refugee camps.

The P&CE statements also included some examples of participatory action research projects:

- **Staffordshire University's** 'Get Talking' approach involved collaborating with community partners to train a cohort of community researchers. 'Get Talking - Hardship' was a specific project that worked with community researchers to gather experiences of hardship and poverty.





Lens 1.4 What kinds of activities do HEIs foreground? cont.

The final category of activities identified in our review focused on 'being a good neighbour'. These activities were not expressly focused on sharing knowledge and rather prioritised the universities social responsibility within their local and regional area.

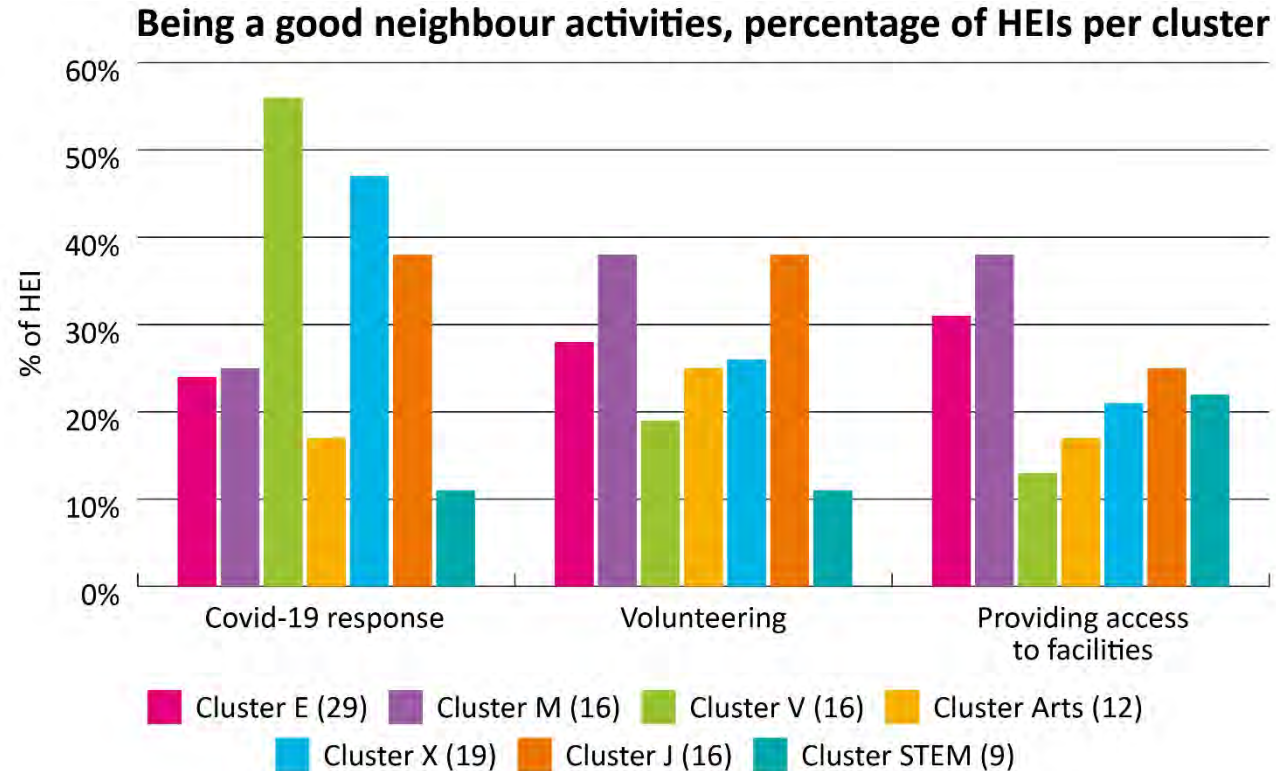


Figure 12: Being a good neighbour activities

Cluster breakdown

'Being a good neighbour' activities were referenced across all clusters. Cluster V HEIs focused more attention on Covid-19 response activities, and less on volunteering and providing access to facilities. STEM cluster HEIs made very limited reference to Covid-19 response and volunteering activities.

Case studies: being a good neighbour

The University of Essex describe how their student volunteering programme offers a range of different activities that are specifically designed to respond to the needs of communities local to the university.

Brunel University London focuses on sharing facilities for the benefit on local and regional publics. They highlight a commitment to work in partnership with the local authority to use their facilities to contribute to the economic, cultural and health outcomes of the local area.



Lens 1.5 Which publics do HEIs work with?

The penultimate ‘lens’ focused on how HEIs described and categorised the publics and communities that they worked with.

We looked in detail at the Strategy and Summary sections of the P&CE narratives. Whilst it was also possible to code the different publics that HEIs engaged in their activities, this only provided a picture of the publics included in the example activities. By looking at the Strategy and Summary sections we were able to better understand which publics and communities institutions identified as their strategic priority.

Our initial search was framed broadly: we wanted to examine the types of organisations as well as the kinds of publics and communities that HEIs highlighted in their narratives, aware that many HEIs undertake their P&CE in partnership with external organisations. It is worth noting that many HEIs did not explicitly define the range of publics or partners with whom they engaged.

We found it helpful to cluster these external ‘publics’ into two types – ‘citizens’, referring to individuals or groups of citizens; and organisations (who acted as intermediaries, who provided access to communities, as well as being the intended participants.)

Publics

Organisations/ groups	Organisations/groups can be defined as public and third sector groups (like schools or science and discovery centres) that may provide HEIs with access to intended communities, as well as being the intended participants. The organisations/groups referenced in the Strategy and Summary sections can be seen below.
Citizen publics	Citizen publics include individuals or groups of citizens who HEIs engage with.

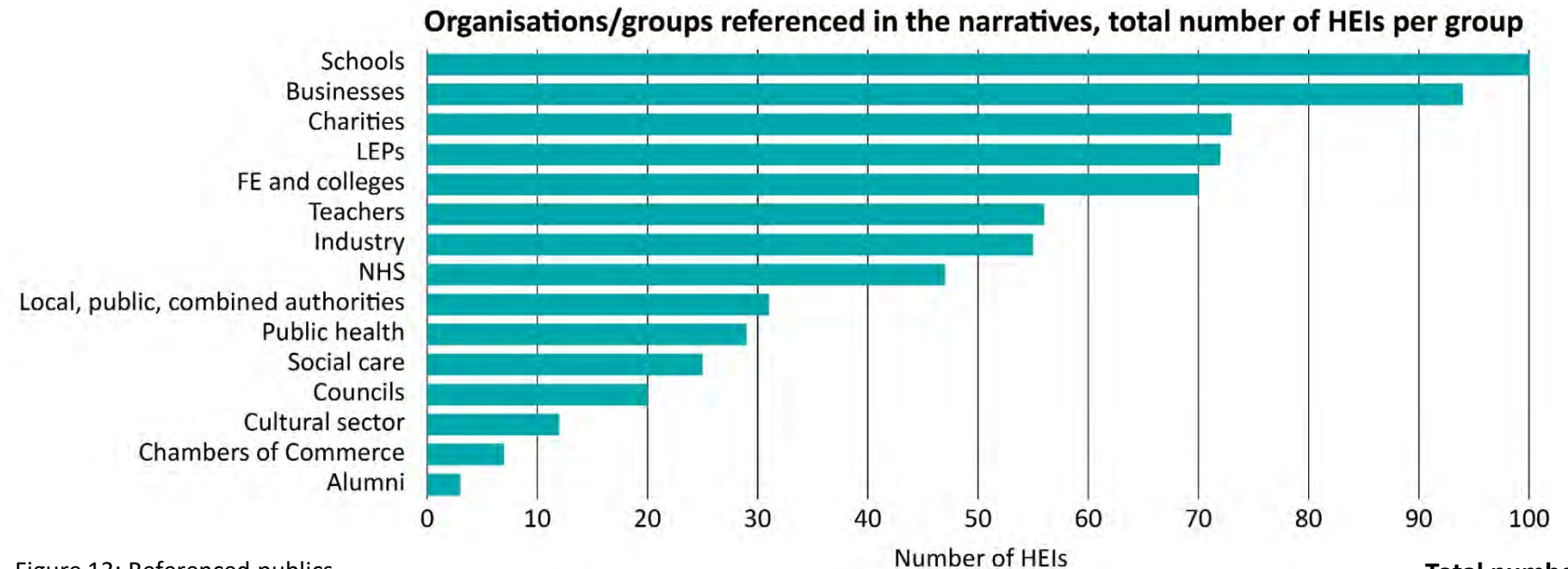


Figure 13: Referenced publics



Lens 1.5 Which publics do HEIs work with? cont.

Organisations and groups

Businesses, schools, charities, LEPs and FE colleges were the most frequently cited organisations/groups.

References made to **schools** tended to focus on whole school activity, often with the wider aim of engaging teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils, parents and governors.

Working with business and industry

The frequency of references to business and industry was striking, with over 80% of HEIs in clusters E, M, X, and J referring to businesses as one of their priority organisations/groups.

Businesses were generally referred to as individual profit-making organisations with commercial activity.

References to industry were broader, referring to the physical and social infrastructure that surround businesses: for example, industry networks, industry consultants, and industry consortia. Additionally, there was a particular focus on the creative industries e.g., film and television and performing arts.

We were surprised to see the frequency with which these links were mentioned, as HE policy and practice has tended to treat 'business engagement' and 'public engagement' as separate domains: with business engagement focused on economic development and commercialisation, and public engagement on broader social benefits, such as lifelong learning, with a clear separation between them in terms of both purposes and stakeholders, and the funding to support them.

However, many HEIs seem to be moving beyond this simple dichotomy.

For some, this was because they framed public engagement very broadly, encompassing any kind of collaborative activity with non-HE partners. For them, businesses are a 'public', and the goal of their engagement activity is community benefit:

'We work closely with community and third sector organisations, professions, business, local government, health and welfare services to ensure our teaching, research and wider engagement have direct relevance to wide-ranging communities.' [UWE]

The increasing focus on place and civic responsibility in HEIs also helps to explain the frequent mentions of business engagement in the P&CE narratives. In developing an integrated approach to realising social and economic benefit, many HEIs now have a more 'public-centred' narrative to explain their approach to economic development. Northumbria University is typical:

'Strong civic bonds are a key component of an economically inclusive and socially mobile society. Higher Education Institutions are able to transform the lives of stakeholders through public and community engagement. At Northumbria University, partnership working underpins our research and education as a core element of the University Strategy. This approach entrusts academics to contribute to the community through working with entrepreneurs, practitioners, employers, third sector, public institutions and individuals.'

For some HEIs, business engagement- both locally and regionally - was focused on developing and improving their business practices, supporting under-developed businesses, and responding to challenges faced by businesses. For others, engagement with businesses was about working together to solve real world challenges. Finally, a small collection of institutions used their partnerships with businesses to inform their students' learning experience, shaping curricula to ensure graduates had the skills required by local businesses, as well as supporting students to start small local businesses.

Despite featuring prominently as a priority organisation/group in the strategy section, we found that businesses were far less commonly targeted in the activities which HEIs chose to foreground in their narratives. Business engagement was only referenced in activities within Cluster M and V. This activity focused on local business predominantly within the SME business sector. These HEIs cited activities intended to support enterprise and knowledge transfer with local businesses, as well as to foster business growth through workshops and resources, particularly within global majority SME businesses.



Lens 1.5 Which publics do HEIs work with? cont.

The citizen publics referenced in the strategy sections can be seen below:

Citizen publics, total number of HEIs per public

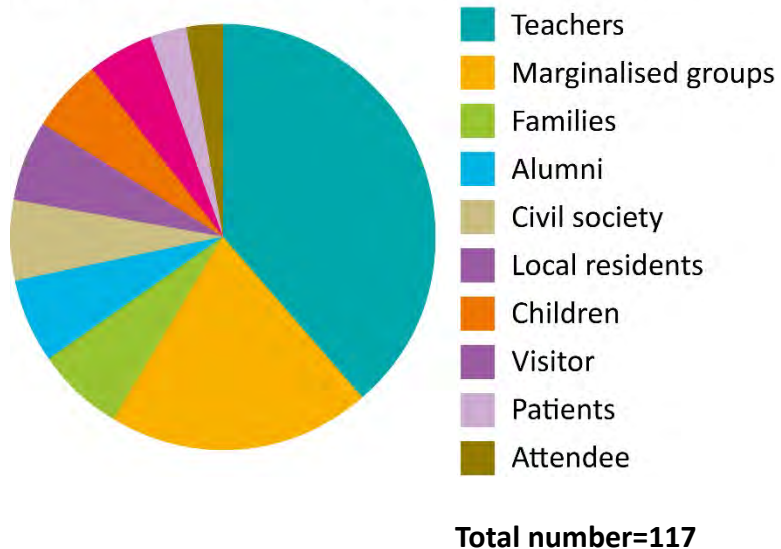


Figure 14: Citizen publics

Teachers

Our analysis drew distinctions between schools as an organisation/group, and teachers as a citizen public. Statements discussing the engagement of teachers included groups of teachers with specific identities e.g., LGBT+ teachers and subject-specific teachers e.g., science. Reference to teachers tended to prioritise building teaching skills and gathering input from teachers on engagement activities, emphasizing the importance of person-to-person interaction. The role of schools as an organisation/group focused more of sharing knowledge with students, outreach and widening participation.

Marginalised groups

Marginalised groups were the second most frequently referenced citizen public. Looking specifically at the language HEIs used to discuss these groups it was possible to break this category down further into 'marginalised', 'under-represented' and 'hard to reach'. Interestingly when HEIs talked about under-represented groups they rarely provided any contextual information about who they were referring to. Similarly, many references to marginalised groups did not unpack this term to explain what form/s of marginalisation they were referring to, although some institutions were more specific, for example, stating how they had worked with Gypsy and Roma communities, vulnerable women, and older people. Less institutions referred to 'harder to reach' groups, which we would expect given the shift away from this as a term used to describe groups who

are less frequently engaged by HEIs. However, of the six institutions who did reference 'hard to reach' publics, five specified engagement with young people and one with incarcerated males.

Whilst marginalised groups were not ranked as one of the top strategic priority publics in the Activities section, in the Strategy and Summary sections they were identified as one of the most engaged-with groups across all clusters, featuring in at least 50% of statements across all clusters, and up to 72% in Cluster E. We can assume this focus is at least in part due to the political and social emphasis on inclusion. It will be interesting to see if the language used to discuss 'marginalised groups' and the approaches taken are refined in future iterations of the KEF, as more institutions embed inclusive practice into their strategic priorities.



Lens 1.5 Which publics do HEIs work with? cont.

Spotlight on Patient and Public Involvement

Although patients were relatively rarely prioritised in the Strategy sections, 39 HEIs made some reference to patient engagement or PPI (Patient and Public Involvement, often in the Activities section.

The activity spanned a range of different approaches and types of activity. Some highlighted the importance of patient engagement to inform research directions (e.g., through advisory groups); some focused on engagement with the research process; others on communicating the outcomes of the research.

There was specific mention of the term Patient Involvement in 20 HEIs. In many, patient engagement and involvement was mentioned briefly, as one example of their overall public engagement portfolio, or as an area of work embedded elsewhere in the institution:

“Our Public Engagement with Research unit inspires and supports high-quality engagement across all disciplines, collaborating closely with Public Policy, Research & Innovation Services, Widening Participation and Patient/Public Involvement teams”. **Uni of Southampton**

For others, Patient Involvement is one of the key strands of their Public Engagement strategy:

“We coordinate a varied programme of events, activities and partnerships around four strands: schools’ outreach and widening participation; public engagement with research; community engagement; and patient engagement and involvement”. **Imperial College**

A number of HEIs described the work of Research Centres taking a determined approach to developing and embedding new forms of patient engagement and involvement practice, emphasising co-production.

Case study: Supporting patient engagement and involvement

Public and Patient Engagement in Healthcare and Medicine. Between 2017 and 2020, Keele’s Public and Patient Involvement and Engagement Unit has enabled the patient voice to be heard in 402 research studies across the West Midlands. Our Research User Group (RUG) grew its membership during the period from 117 to 165. **University of Keele**

Our work in **Public and Patient Involvement (PPI)** is nationally leading, and numerous groups with a variety of lived experiences make crucial contributions to our medical research. For instance, the Peninsula Public Involvement Group (PenPIG), attached to the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration South West Peninsula (PenARC), comprises patients, service users and carers with associate University status: patient perspectives are at the forefront of research, e.g. by advising on grant applications. **University of Exeter**

Public and Patient Involvement at Warwick Medical School

Working through our PPI Lead with Research Involvement and Engagement we are strengthening the public voice in publishing and normalising public engagement with research. We are collaborating with multiple national organisations to shape public and professional dialogue on genetics and screening. **University of Warwick**

UCL’s Centre for Co-Production in Health Research (CoPro) is a co-production community of researchers, patients, carers and practitioners with funding provided for co-produced research. The Centre involved the public at formation, with co-creation of the principles and Centre objectives. **UCL**





Lens 1.6 Who do HEIs work with to achieve their goals?

In addition to identifying the different publics HEIs engage as part of their P&CE practice, we also sought to understand who HEIs partnered with in order to achieve their more strategic P&CE goals. These included organisations who were not only partners on specific projects but were involved in the wider institutional P&CE strategy.

To gather these insights, we coded the strategy sections of the P&CE narratives. While not always explicit, we were able to identify some key partners who were instrumental in HEIs reaching their P&CE goals.

LEPs

The P&CE strategies frequently referred to partnerships between the HEI and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), this was often a bi-directional relationship where senior HEI staff sat on a LEP board, whilst LEPs were represented on HEI's boards and steering groups. Additionally, LEPs were a source of funding for some HEIs engagement activity, whilst other institutions discussed joining with LEPs to invest in technology and equipment to support the development of research and training.

NHS Trusts

NHS trusts were also mentioned as key strategic partners. Representatives would sit on HEIs stakeholder advisory boards and would feed into teaching strategies, enhancing the curriculum with the aims of training high quality graduates from health disciplines, as well as influencing research strategies to ensure research is applied to solving real-world challenges.

Local Authorities

Local authorities were commonly cited as a key strategic partner, both in setting research agendas and providing lines of communication between HEIs and citizens.

Some HEIs discussed working specifically to support Local Authorities' existing strategic priorities, as one institution highlighted: *'Local authorities are best placed to determine the needs of their electorate and therefore the University can make the most impactful use of our expertise and resources by working with them to support their strategic priorities.'* (LSBU).

The value of relationships between local authorities and senior HEI staff was mentioned in a small number of statements, however, the scope and nature of these relationships were not discussed in detail.



Lens 1.6 Who do HEIs work with to achieve their goals? cont.

Case study: partnership working

Arts University Bournemouth highlight the important role they play in enhancing the social and economic wellbeing across the region through partnerships with Dorset LEP.

The **University of Huddersfield** identify how their staff actively engage with LEAs, local councils and regional policy makers and how this is embedded within their institutional Public Engagement Strategy.

Coventry University describe how their initial engagement framework has been developed into an anchor alliance for Coventry and Warwickshire through working in partnerships with local authorities, NHS trusts, the Coventry and Warwickshire LEP and the University of Warwick. Their narrative highlights how they have collectively developed priorities on education, health and wellbeing, enterprise and economy, employment, and collaboration.



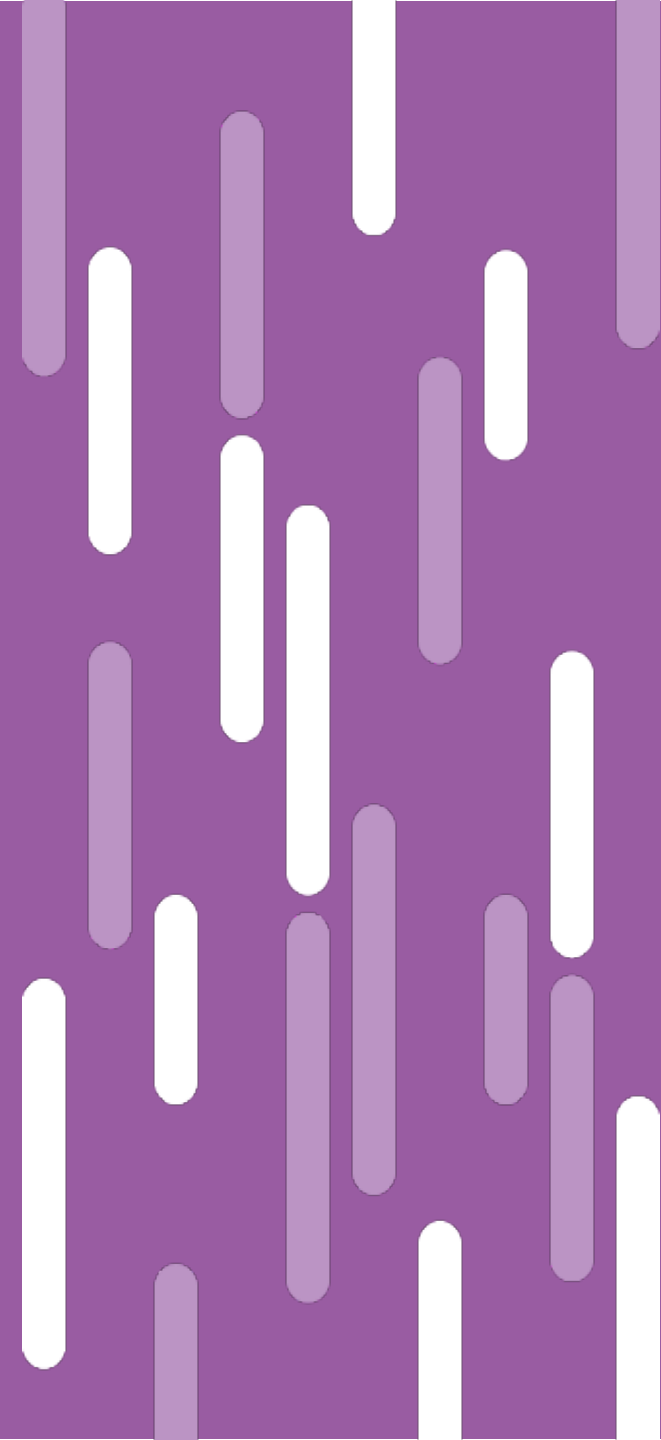
Governance arrangements

The governance of these partnerships varied across institutions with some institutions holding regular partner meetings and others hosting larger bi-annual events for partners.

Similarly, some partnerships existed at a central level: for example, strategic partnerships with NHS trusts to deliver new on-campus teaching and research focused health facilities for members of the public. Others operated more at faculty scale: for example, the involvement of NHS trusts in shaping curricula.

Analysis of the statements did suggest that civic agreements were a useful mechanism and framework for maintaining dialogue with these key strategic partners, providing a structure which formalised these relationships. These agreements provided transparent processes through which HEIs and intermediaries could remain in dialogue.

Chapter 2: How HEIs support public engagement





2. How HEIs support public engagement

Headlines

Narratives identified a range of approaches to support P&CE activity. Many of these reflect the NCCPE's **EDGE tool** criteria for building support for P&CE. These included:

- Dedicated staff resource – including P&CE specific central staff, staff in wider centralised KE departments with P&CE in their job role, and staff who support P&CE at a department or research centre scale.
- Building staff and students capacity for P&CE, through offering training, although many of the references to training were not explicit about their P&CE focus.
- Seed funding to support staff to engage the public.
- Supporting public involvement, including publics in governance roles, and providing access points for communities.
- The importance of including P&CE in reward and recognition, including promotion criteria, award schemes, and performance reviews.
- The funding provided for this work was not an explicit ask of the KEF – those who chose to cite funding sources included HEIF, research council grants, and QR funding.

Overview of this section:

This section is focused on **how HEIs support public engagement**. It provides a detailed look at the way HEIs discuss their support for P&CE in the narratives. We have examined the way HEIs organise and govern their P&CE support, the diversity of support being presented in the P&CE narratives, how they fund P&CE, and their approach to working in partnerships.

The narratives provide useful insights into the diversity of ways in which HEIs organise themselves to support P&CE, though the lack of consistent data being shared makes it hard to draw hard and fast conclusions (for instance about how HEIs fund the activity).

The support faces in two directions: **inward**, to build capacity, and **outward** to support public and community

Lenses used in this section

- How do HEIs organise themselves to deliver and support P&CE?
- What kinds of support, assets and resources and HEIs investing in?
- What funding do HEIs draw on?
- How do HEIs approach partnership working?



Lens 2.1 How do HEIs organise themselves to deliver and support PE?

For this lens, we looked within the Support section of the P&CE narratives for detail about how HEIs staff their P&CE. 51 HEIs provided detail on how they organised their staffing to support engagement activities, with ten mentioning more than one approach.

We categorised the P&CE staffing detail into three different organisational and resourcing approaches:

- Non-P&CE specific central staff/team
- Centralised P&CE specific staff/team
- Department level staff/team with P&CE in job role

Some HEIs discussed using a mixture of staffing approaches, whilst other HEIs only foreground one approach in their narrative. The following chart shows the number of HEIs citing each staffing approach:

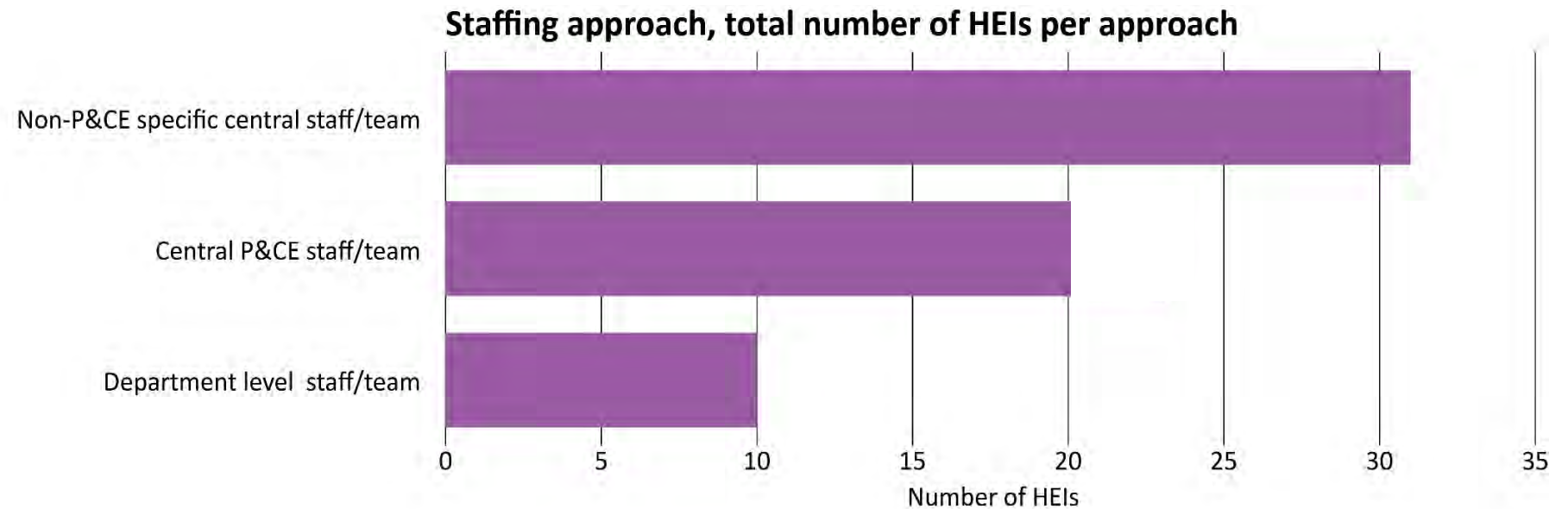


Figure 15: Staffing approach

Total number=51



Lens 2.1 How do HEIs organise themselves to deliver and support PE? cont.

Table 7: Staffing approach descriptions

Staffing approach	
Non-P&CE specific central staff/team	This staffing approach involved staff with P&CE in their job roles, who are located within centralised KE support departments.
Centralised P&CE specific staff/team	This staffing approach involved specialist P&CE staff who sit within centralised P&CE teams.
Department level staff/team	This staffing approach involved both academic and P&CE staff roles situated within individual departments/research centres.

The approaches weren't mutually exclusive - HEIs sometimes referenced more than one of the approaches, and we explore these overlaps below.

Of the 51 HEIs who shared staffing details, the most common approach was for P&CE support to be provided centrally through non-P&CE specific roles, with 31 HEIs stating this as their staffing approach. The staff sat within a range of different central teams, for example, Development and Alumni Office, or Access and Widening Participation teams. In this staffing approach P&CE comprised part of the staff member's workload.

20 HEIs provided centralised support through specialist P&CE teams where public engagement was the main focus of the team and where the staff's primary job role was supporting P&CE. This support involved increasing engagement skills and building capacity within university staff as well as establishing and maintaining connections with publics in order to foster opportunities for future collaborations.

10 HEIs identified having P&CE staff situated within departments or research centres. This included senior research staff who had specialist P&CE training and expertise, as well as non-research staff for whom supporting and growing public engagement with research was their primary job role.

We looked across the data to see if there were overlaps in HEIs who referenced the different staffing approaches. 10 HEIs referenced using two different approaches. The most frequent combination of staffing approach discussed in the narratives, was a central P&CE specific team along with department level P&CE support staff. This was referenced by five HEIs. The least common combination was a central P&CE specific team and non-P&CE specific centralised team, only referenced by two HEIs.



Lens 2.1 How do HEIs organise themselves to deliver and support PE? cont.

Specialist P&CE staff skills

Our review of the narratives also explored what specialist skills P&CE staff or teams brought to the institution.

Whilst there was relatively limited reference to the specific expertise provided by P&CE staff, the narratives that chose to discuss P&CE staff skills highlight a diverse range of skills.

We have clustered these as supporting **outward facing** activities, intended to directly grow the HEI's P&CE footprint and supporting **inward facing** activities, aimed at building P&CE capacity within the institution.

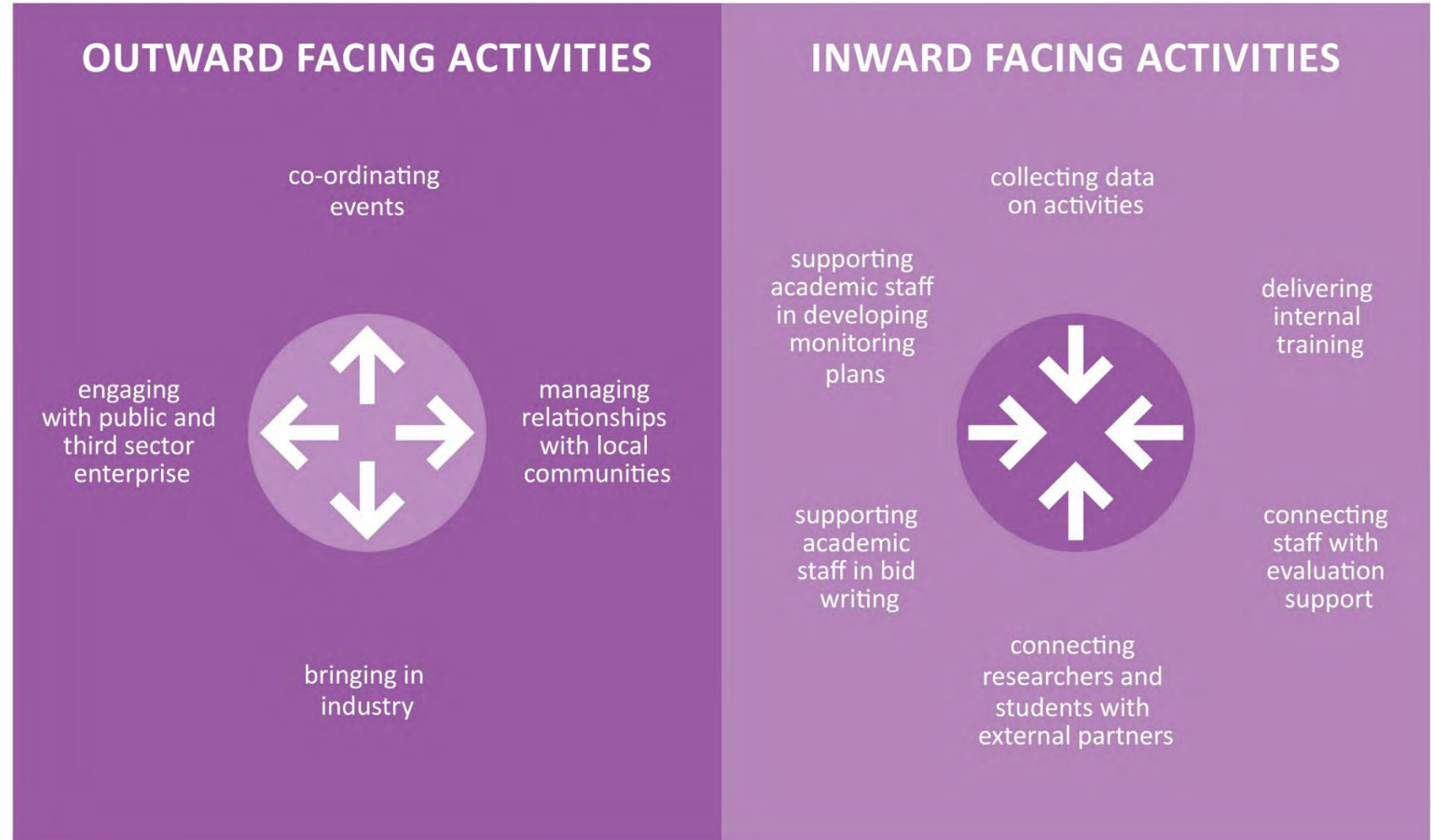


Figure 16: Outward and inward facing activities



Lens 2.1 How do HEIs organise themselves to deliver and support PE? cont.

Numbers of staff employed to support P&CE

Where mentioned, we recorded the number of staff supporting P&CE. This included support delivered through any of the three staffing approaches discussed above.

Only eight HEIs provided detail of the number of staff employed in P&CE roles. Of those who were explicit in their P&CE staffing details, there was a significant range of allocated support. HEIs identified having between one and 28 staff with P&CE in their job roles, although the majority had significantly lower numbers, with a median of three.

We examined the data to look for a correlation between HEIs that stated their staffing detail and their wider strategic support approach (discussed in detail in the following section). We found no clear relationship.

We also looked for a correlation between HEIs who cited their staffing numbers and their support self-scores. Our analysis found that five of the eight HEIs who stated their staffing numbers self-scored a 4 or 5 for the Support sections of the P&CE narratives.

Additionally, when we looked for a relationship between HEIs who cited both their staffing numbers and staffing approach, we found that 5 identified having centralised P&CE specific staff/teams. One identified having P&CE support integrated with other centralised departments, one had P&CE support that was delivered at a department level, and one had both P&CE support integrated with other centralized departments and at a department level.

Case study: staffing arrangements

Queen Mary University of London provided detail on their P&CE staffing numbers and staffing approach. Their narrative sets out how four dedicated P&CE specific staff sit centrally within the Centre for Public Engagement (CPE). These staff are responsible for embedding a culture of P&CE across the institution.

Bath Spa University described their mixed approach to supporting P&CE activity. P&CE support sits centrally within their Research Support Office, as well as at department level. Central support is delivered by two staff members who are NCCPE ambassadors. At a department level Bath Spa University has P&CE champions who provide peer support in P&CE.

Goldsmiths, University of London, highlight how they have embedded support for P&CE at a department level by establishing a '*network of Public Engagement Representatives in each of our 19 academic departments, appointed in liaison with Heads of Department with time allocated into their workloads*'.





Lens 2.2 What kinds of support, assets and resources are HEIs investing in?

For this lens, we explored the range of ways HEIs are supporting P&CE.

We analysed the Support sections of the P&CE narratives in order to uncover the types of support infrastructure being resourced as well as the financial investment into engagement activity (discussed in the next section of this report).

Our review of the Support sections of the P&CE narratives identified the following types of support being the most frequently mentioned:

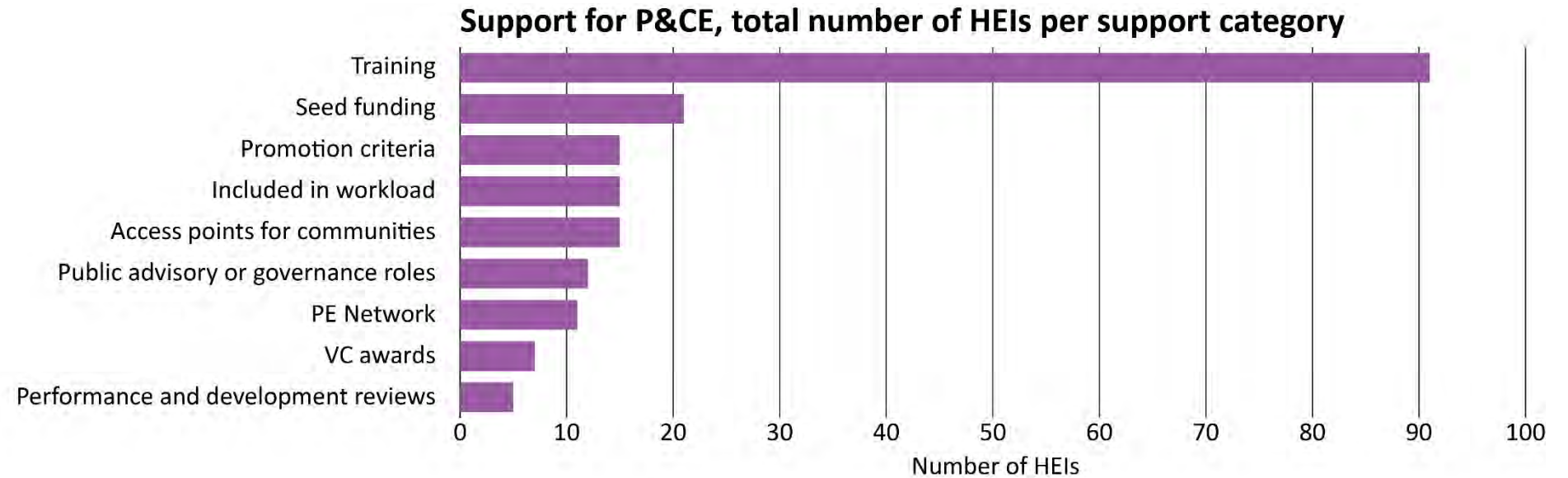


Figure 17: Support for P&CE

Total number = 95



Lens 2.2 What kinds of support, assets and resources are HEIs investing in? cont.

We found it helpful to cluster the types of support on offer as follows, informed by the focal points set out in NCCPE's [Edge Tool](#)

Table 8: Support definitions

Support	
Learning	
Training and professional development	Includes activities design to build capacity within HEI staffing.
Supporting staff and students	
Seed funding	Relates to small grants awarded internally to build capacity, enabling research staff to explore and develop P&CE collaborations.
Support for bid writing and development	Relates to the support available to researchers to enable them to include P&CE in bid development.
Internal PE networks	Refers to networks within the HEI that support P&CE. These can be across departments and can involve researchers, PEPs and other HEI staff.
Supporting public involvement	
Involving publics in governance roles	Involves the inclusion of publics in the spaces where P&CE decisions are made/informed.
Access points for communities	Refers to the ways in which communities can contact/engage with the HEI, either to speak with an HEI staff member or to gather information about the institution's activities.
Recognition	
Promotion criteria	Involves the inclusion of P&CE activities in the criteria for internal promotions.
VC awards	Refers to the recognition of staffs P&CE activity in Vice Chancellor awards, or similar.
Performance and development reviews	Involves monitoring existing P&CE work and setting aims for future engagement activities in research staff's annual development reviews.



Lens 2.2 What kinds of support, assets and resources are HEIs investing in? cont.

Learning – Training & Professional Development

Training was the most commonly referenced type of support offered to staff to enable them to embed P&CE into their practice. The narratives described four different types of training:

- *In-house training - general*: training which is not explicitly focused on P&CE.
- *In-house training - P&CE specific*: training specifically aimed at supporting P&CE.
- *Funding to attend external training*: provision available to enable staff to engage with events or courses outside the HEI, which build their capacity for P&CE.
- *External trainers*: the involvement of trainers from outside of the institution to build P&CE capacity.

This chart shows how different clusters offer/deliver P&CE training:

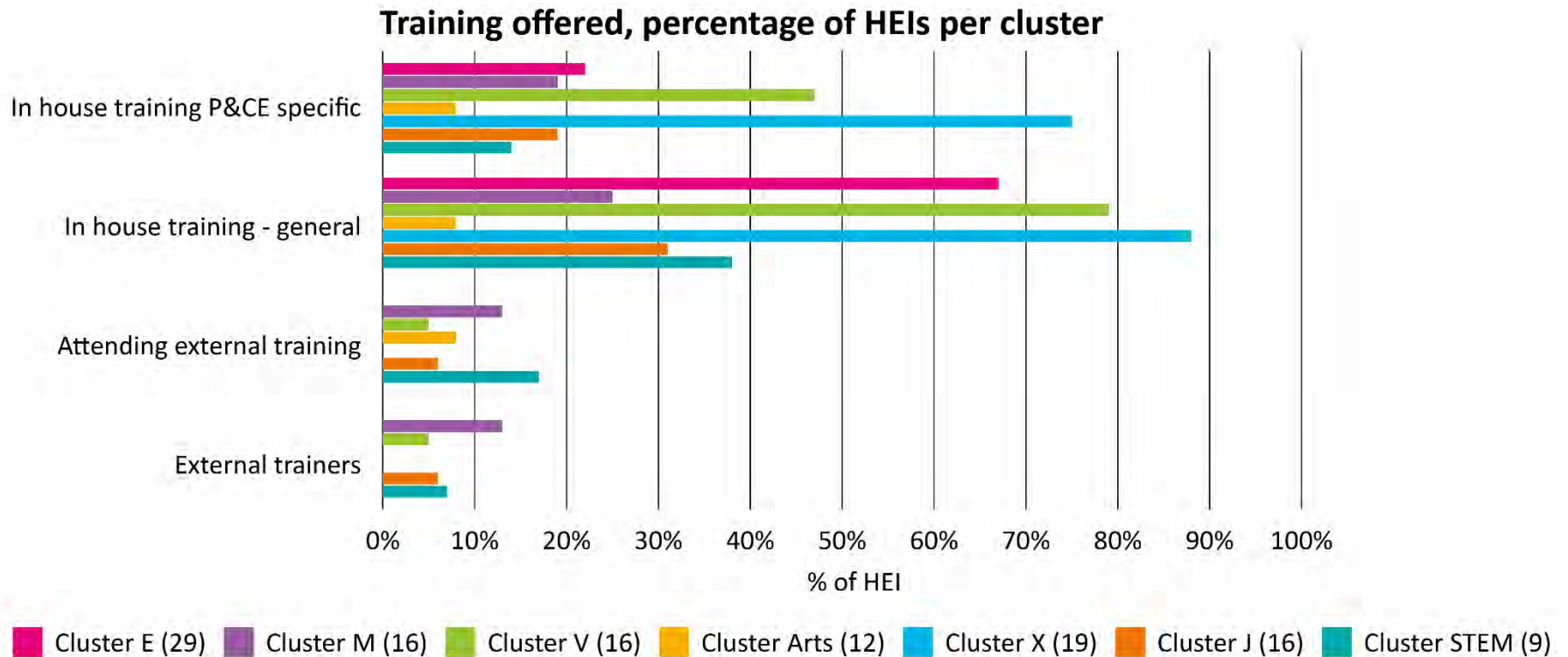


Figure 18: Training support

Out of the 117 HEIs, 56 referred to general in-house training, 34 to specific P&CE in-house training, 10 to training through attending external events and 6 to training delivering within the HEI but delivered by an external trainer. 38 HEIs referred to at least two of the training offers in their narratives, with 35 of these delivering training through both P&CE specific and general in-house training.



Lens 2.2 What kinds of support, assets and resources are HEIs investing in? cont.

Learning – Training & Professional Development cont.

General in-house training did not include a specific focus on building P&CE skills and included activities such as media and communications training.

P&CE specific in-house training was delivered by specialist P&CE staff and specifically aimed to increase P&CE capacity among staff. Examples of P&CE specific training included building community partnerships and evaluating P&CE projects. Both general in-house training and P&CE specific in-house training were cited in each of the seven clusters.

The provision of funding to attend training was cited in five clusters, this type of training included external courses e.g., NCCPE's Engage Researchers Academy, as well as funding for staff to attend conferences and one-off workshop events.

Finally, four clusters discussed using **external trainers** to deliver P&CE tailored training for their staff. Clusters X, J, M, and E were represented across all the four different training approaches. Arts cluster HEIs included in-house training and funding to attend external training, whilst HEIs from Cluster V and STEM only chose to foreground in-house training activities in the support sections of their P&CE narratives.

Case study: approaches to training

Imperial College set out a training and opportunities framework, intended to build P&CE capacity across their staff. They deliver a range of different activities and resources including lighter touch resources, which reach a wide range of staff, through to more in-depth Engagement Academies, targeting a much smaller number of staff annually.

London Metropolitan University highlight how they are working with Citizens UK to create training for students and staff on how to engage and work in partnership with communities.

University of Derby identifies how a permanent impact officer situated in their University Research and Knowledge Exchange office supports staff through training and resources for planning, conducting and evaluating public engagement activities.





Lens 2.2 What kinds of support, assets and resources are HEIs investing in? cont.

Supporting staff and students – seed funding

Seed funding to support P&CE was cited in 21 statements.

This funding varied from one-off grants available to researchers to develop partnership projects with communities, through to annual grants for researchers to work with local communities, or, in a small selection of statements, for communities to apply for, to support partnership working.

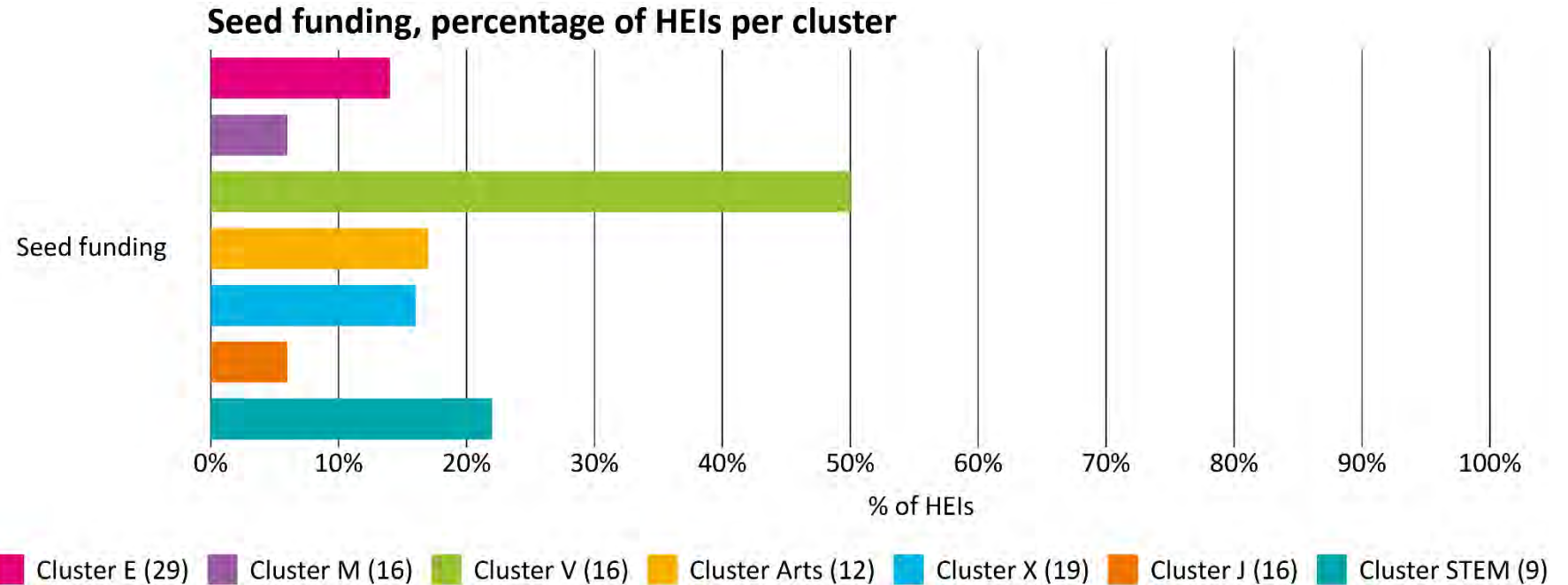


Figure 19: Seed funding

Cluster breakdown

Cluster V HEIs most frequently referred to the provision of seed funding with 50% of Cluster V HEIs mentioning seed funding to support research staff to carry out P&CE. Additionally, 22% of STEM cluster HEIs foreground seed funding to support P&CE in their narratives.



Lens 2.2 What kinds of support, assets and resources are HEIs investing in? cont.

Supporting staff and students cont.

Internal networks

- Internal networks were referenced as a P&CE resource in 12 P&CE statements.
- The networks commonly targeted research staff, and often postgraduate students.
- They provided informal spaces for researchers to share experiences, as well as more official training opportunities in a small number of cases.

Support for bid writing and development

Our review identified three HEIs that demonstrated a strategic approach to embedding P&CE in their bid development process. The three institutions offered bid writing support for academics through different methods, which ranged from informal drop-in advice clinics to dedicated time for research and engagement teams to work with academics. These methods were designed to ensure P&CE is costed into appropriate research proposals and that the proposed engagement is of a high quality.

Case study: P&CE networks

Oxford Brooks University's narrative highlights the importance of their public engagement network. The narrative identifies how the network is well established and provides a space for both staff and students to share knowledge and develop strategies to promote P&CE across the institution. Additionally, members of the network sit on a steering group which oversees the implementation of the institution's P&CE strategy.



Case study: support for bid writing

Whilst a number of institutions referenced strategic support for embedding P&CE in bid development, **King's College London** provided a clear account of their support offer as well as evidencing the scope of their support. King's College describe how their Impact and Engagement Services Team have supported nearly 400 researchers to incorporate P&CE into their funding bids since 2017 through a dedicated programme.





Lens 2.2 What kinds of support, assets and resources are HEIs investing in? cont.

Supporting Public Involvement

The two most frequently mentioned interventions to support public involvement were the provision of access points for communities, and the involvement of publics in governance roles.

Involving publics in governance roles

HEIs mentioned public advisory roles in 12 of the P&CE statements.

In some cases publics played an active role in inputting to P&CE strategy (see example below).

In others, the purpose of the public advisors was less clearly articulated, or they were less involved in the strategic decision making around P&CE. Some HEIs described presenting periodic updates on their current engagement activities and priorities to the public.

Providing access points for communities

Our review looked at what was being done to support communities to access HEIs. Only 15 HEIs explicitly referenced how communities can access the HEI.

Whilst some statements identified having specific enquiries teams, the majority of institutions appear to be relying predominantly on information provided on their webpages. Accounts of public facing webpages varied from general information on P&CE within the HEI, to more specific information targeting particular audiences, for example patients. A small number of statements highlighted a more active engagement with publics through their social media accounts, with staff members responding to questions and comments, as well as initiating contact with some local communities.

Case study: governance roles

The **University of Brighton** worked in collaboration with public representatives to identify the needs of local communities, which informed the subsequent P&CE strategy. The public advisors were also involved in supporting the HEI to respond to the identified needs.



Case study: access for communities

The **University of East London** identified how their external facing team of three staff look after all public enquiries. Additionally, the institution highlighted the importance of bespoke websites created for 44 different research groups, which are tailored to target specific public audiences.





Lens 2.2 What kinds of support, assets and resources are HEIs investing in? cont.

Recognition

Recognition for staff and student involvement in P&CE featured in three distinct ways. The most frequently cited intervention was the inclusion of P&CE in promotions criteria.

Promotion criteria

A total of 15 HEIs discussed including staff members' P&CE engagement as part of their promotion criteria. For many of these HEIs the inclusion of P&CE in the promotion criteria was a relatively new addition, beginning from 2016 onwards. There was limited information about how this was enacted in practice. A few HEIs did provide information that they used developmental frameworks, which included P&CE activity, to enable academics to build a case for promotion.

Vice Chancellor awards

Vice Chancellor awards (or equivalent) were highlighted as a mechanism for recognising high quality P&CE at an institutional scale. A total of seven HEIs referenced the use of vice chancellor awards in the Support sections of their P&CE narratives.

Performance and development reviews

Five HEIs discussed including P&CE in staff performance and development reviews. This focused on recognising the engagement work staff had carried out over the previous year as well as setting objectives for the following year.

Case study: awards

The University of Oxford are one of a number of HEIs who discussed the use of Vice Chancellor Awards to recognize and reward P&CE activity. The institution has a specific VC award for Public Engagement with Research (PER) which specifically recognises engagement beyond academia.





Lens 2.3 What funding do HEIs draw on?

For this lens we looked for evidence of the funding sources HEIs use for their P&CE. We found some evidence, but the data has significant limitations, given that HEIs have reported on this in varying ways, with varying degrees of specificity, and with many choosing not to provide any detail at all.

We searched for references to funders in the statements across the P&CE narratives and identified 65 HEIs who had made some mention of the sources of their funding for P&CE.

We categorised the highlighted funders under HEIF funding; QR funding; research grant funding; and other external funding, which included, local council funding, philanthropic funding, National Lottery funding, Central Government funding, and international funding. We explain these categories on the next page. The results of our analysis can be seen below:

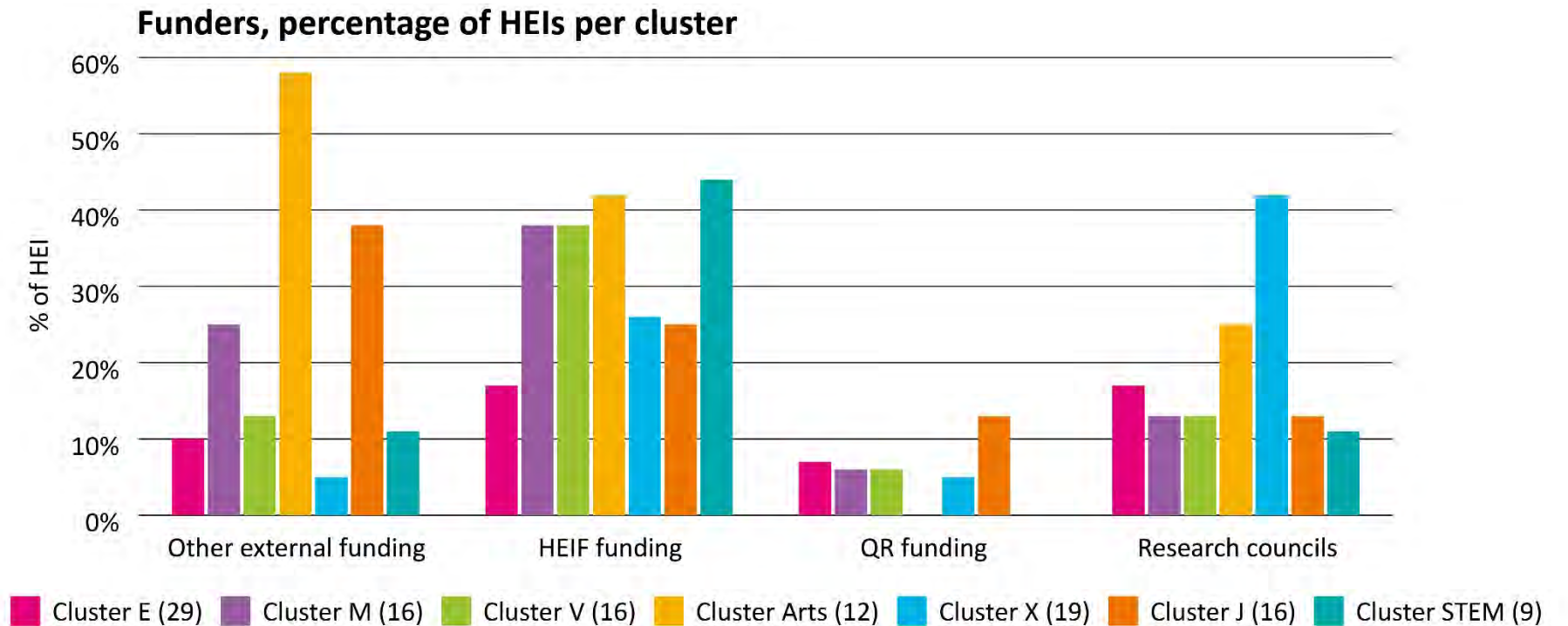


Figure 20: Funders by cluster

Cluster breakdown

With the exception of the Arts Cluster not referencing QR funding, some HEIs from all clusters identified drawing on each of the different funding sources listed above. HEIF funding had the broadest coverage with between 17% and 44% of HEIs from the clusters references the use of HEIF funding to support P&CE. QR funding was referenced the least across the clusters with between 6% and 13% of coverage. Other external funders had the biggest variation in representation across the clusters with only 10% of Cluster E HEIs citing other external funding sources compared to 83% of Arts cluster HEIs.



Lens 2.3 What funding do HEIs draw on? cont.

Table 9: Funding definitions

Funding	
Other external funding	Funding sourced from non-HE funders, including local council funding, philanthropic funding, National Lottery funding, Central Government funding, and international funding.
HEIF funding: Higher Education Innovation Fund	Dedicated KE funding distributed by Research England, HEIF supports and incentivises providers to work with business, public and third-sector organisations, community bodies and the wider public, in order to exchange knowledge and increase the economic and societal benefit from their work. HEIF allocations are performance based, informed by the results of the annual Higher Education Business and Community Interaction (HE-BCI) survey and other data, and underpinned by institutional strategies for KE. Of the HEIs who participated in the KEF, 13 were not eligible for the last round of HEIF funding. £213M was distributed in 2019/20.
QR funding	Quality-related research funding (QR) funding constitutes the majority of funding for research in UK HEPs. It is allocated as a block grant to HEIs, based upon their performance in the REF, a periodic research assessment exercise, which assesses research outputs, research impact and research environment. £1.7 billion was distributed in 2019/20.
Research grant funding	This category included grant funding distributed by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and Wellcome.

HEIF funding had the broadest coverage with between 17% and 44% of HEIs from the clusters referencing the use of HEIF funding to support P&CE. Whilst it should be noted not all universities benefit from HEIF funding, an increasing number of HEIs have used funding from this source to invest in strategic support for P&CE.

QR funding was referenced the least across the clusters with between 6% and 13% of coverage. QR funding is allocated on the basis of the results of the REF, and there is evidence of some universities using QR funding to build a more supportive environment to support impact generating activity, including P&CE, encouraged by the inclusion of Public Engagement with Research as a possible impact pathway.

[The NCCPE review](#) of the REF Environment templates submitted in 2014 revealed that high performing Units of Assessment (4*) typically referenced their strategic support for PE as a key component of their impact strategy.

Wellcome's long standing support for Public Engagement with Research has included public engagement grants, investment in Research Centres with dedicated PE support, and ISSF funding to support institutional infrastructure. 13 HEIs mentioned Wellcome's funding.

Other external funders had the biggest variation in representation across the clusters with only 10% of Cluster E HEIs citing other external funding sources compared to 83% of Arts cluster HEIs (see page 62 for a breakdown of 'other external funders' by clusters).



Lens 2.3 What funding do HEIs draw on? cont.

We also looked at how the 'other external funding' data was distributed across the clusters.

Many institutions provided little or no detail about their funding sources, and so we only have a partial picture of what is happening within the sector.

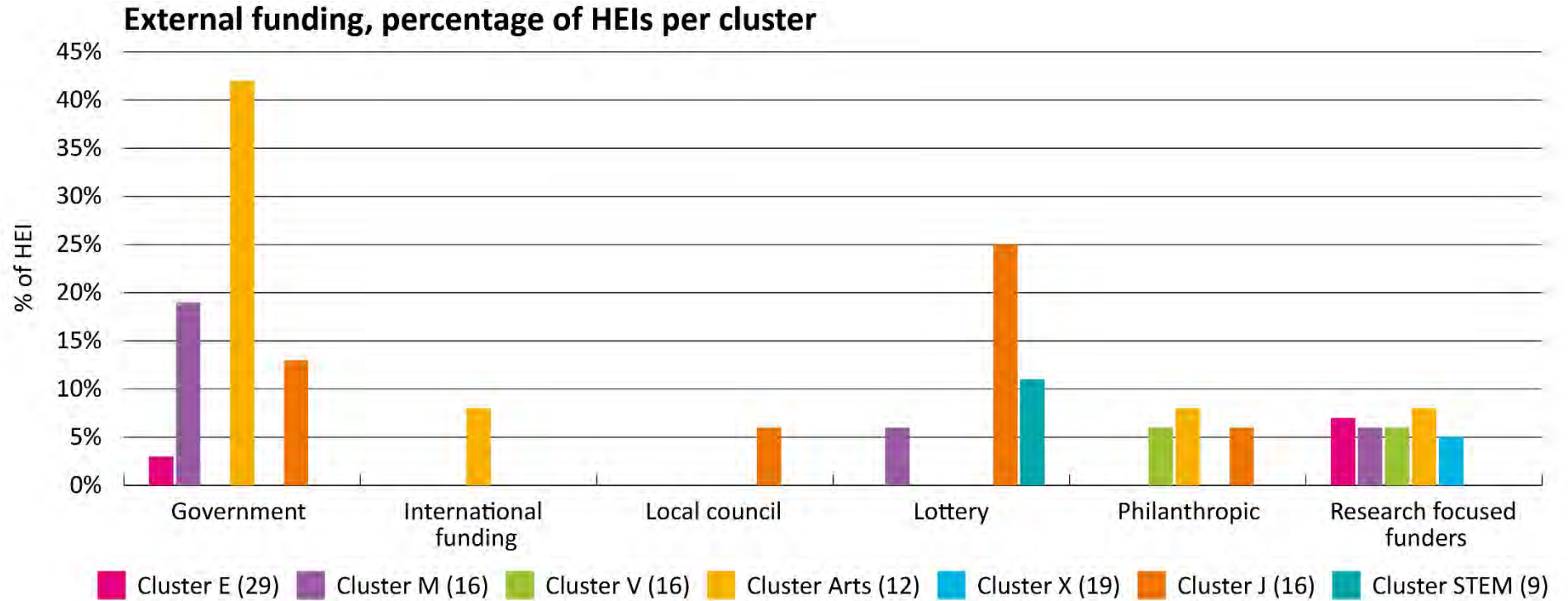


Figure 21: External funding by cluster

Cluster breakdown

Clusters J and the Arts cluster referred to the broadest range of external funding sources, with Cluster J referencing central government, local councils, National Lottery and philanthropic funding sources, and the Arts cluster citing funding from central government, international funding, philanthropic funding sources, and funding from research focused funders. Out of the funders included under the other external category, Cluster X only referenced sourcing funding from 'research focused funders'.



Lens 2.4 How do HEIs approach partnership working?

This final lens explored how HEIs typically approach partnership working.

This complements the analysis we undertook in Lens 1.6: Who do HEIs work with to achieve their goals?

Throughout our review we were able to identify two broad approaches:

- Working with partners to build capacity through specific activities, or
- Working with partners to develop and deepen the institution's P&CE strategy.

These approaches are not mutually exclusive. Many narratives discussed working with partners on specific activities whilst also developing the institution's P&CE strategy through partnership working.

The approaches to **activity-specific partnerships** involved various routes:

Partnering with communities - to respond to local needs or challenges.

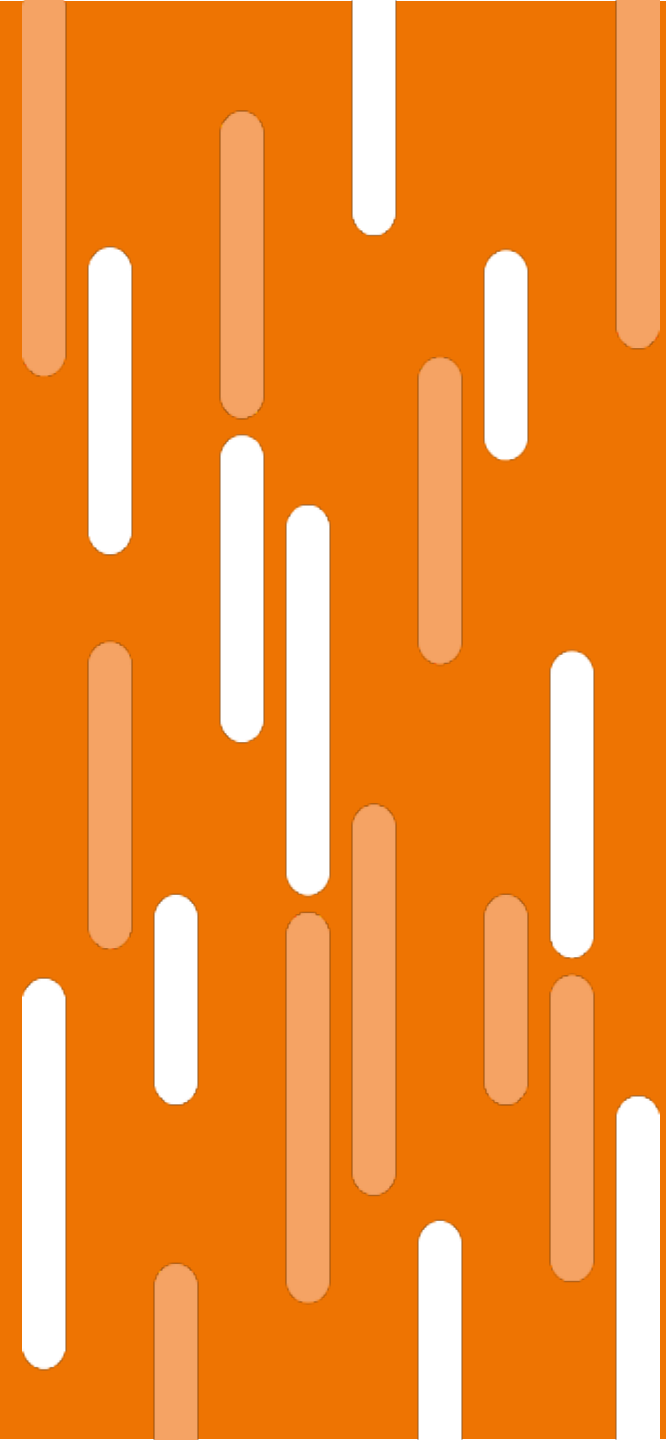
Providing consultancy - for example through supporting the work of national charities who work with wider publics.

Working with cultural organisations - for example to put on exhibitions or to run events.

Partnerships aimed at **supporting HEIs' P&CE strategies** typically involved advisory or steering groups with public representatives, as well as some more targeted engagement with public and statutory bodies which informed the strategic direction of the HEI's engagement work.

Public representatives included people from both the citizen publics and organisations/groups set out in Chapter 1.

Chapter 3: Making a difference





3. Making a difference

Headlines

- Unsurprisingly, many HEIs highlighted that their approaches to monitoring and evaluation were very much ‘works in progress’: they are grappling with how to support this work well.
- While there was useful intelligence about how HEIs approached their evaluation of P&CE, it was often scattered across the narratives. However, there were some examples of HEIs with clearly articulated institutional approaches.
- There were two broad focal points for evaluation: **strategic evaluation** which sought to monitor the effectiveness of their institutional strategy and support; and **project evaluation** which monitored and evaluated the impact of their engagement activities.
- HEIs rarely linked the evaluation data they collect back to their overarching strategic goals.
- In evaluating their activities, HEIs rely heavily on collecting basic monitoring data e.g., attendee numbers at events.

Overview of this section

This section focuses on how HEIs evaluate their P&CE activity.

We explore how they define the impacts of their PE, and how they monitor and evaluate these.

We approached this aware of the fact that the evaluation of P&CE is a challenging area. The self assessment scores submitted for the Results and Learning and Acting on Results sections were significantly lower than for the other 3 sections, illustrated in the chart below, suggesting this was an area for collective improvement.

Lenses used in this section

- What are HEIs’ broad evaluation approaches?
- How do HEIs define the impact of their P&CE?
- How do HEIs monitor and evaluate these impacts?

Average Score per Aspect

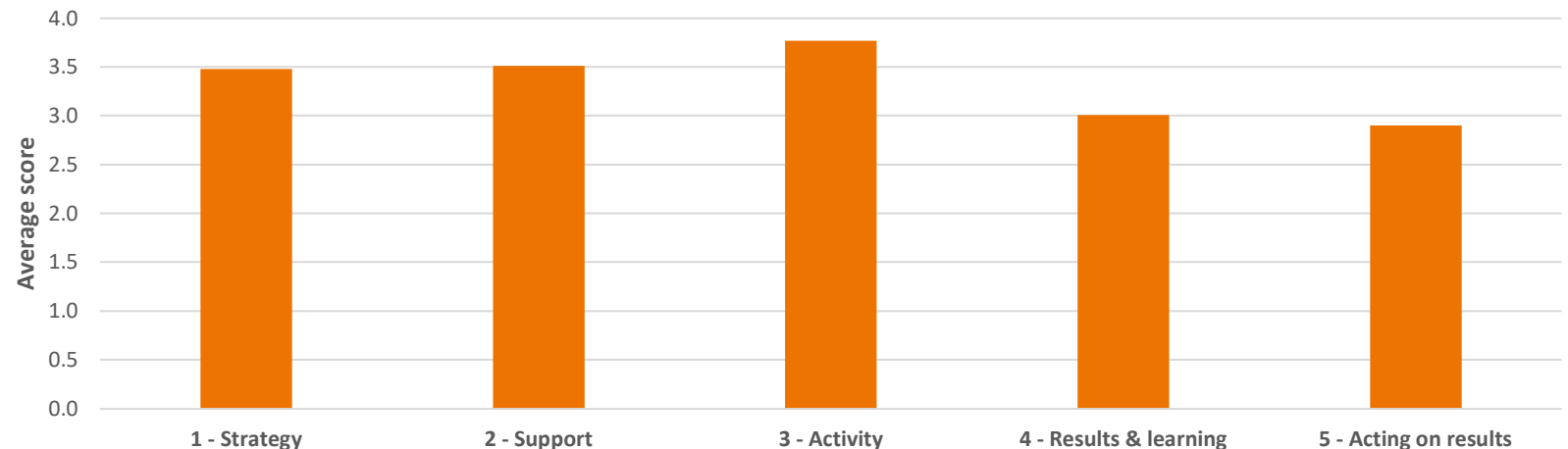


Figure 22: Average self assessment scores per aspect



Evaluation terminology

In our analysis we chose the following definitions to analyse and describe our findings.

Table 10: Evaluation terminology

Evaluation terminology	
Monitoring	Many institutions monitor their engagement work. Monitoring focuses on the numbers and demographics or participants; and outputs associated with the work.
Outputs	Typically these are tangible products, and can usually be counted e.g. publications; art works; training courses.
Outcomes	Usually defined as the results of the activity, or the immediate impacts of the intervention e.g. increased understanding, enjoyment. These can usually be evaluated at the time of the activity.
Impacts	These are changes that have happened as a result of the intervention, and often happen over a longer period of time. Whilst impacts can be short or long lived, they usually require evaluation approaches that capture data after the intervention has happened.
Project evaluation	Evaluation of P&CE activities. You can find out more about how to approach evaluating public engagement activities in the NCCPE guide How to evaluate public engagement projects and programmes
Strategic evaluation	Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of their institutional strategy and support. This included evaluation against the strategic aims, including the contribution made by P&CE activities, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of the institutional support for P&CE. Find out more about how to evaluate your institutional support projects in the NCCPE guide How to evaluate your public engagement support programme



Challenges in analysing the data

It proved challenging to analyse the narratives to derive useful intelligence about how HEIs are defining the impacts of their P&CE activity, and monitoring and evaluating these impacts.

Our focus was on the Results and Learning section of the narratives, as this was where we expected most of the data about impacts and evidence to be found. However, there was a lack of consistency in how people responded to this section, and also in how institutions used the Activities and the Acting on Results sections to reference their impacts and evaluation work.

As referenced earlier, this is clearly an area where institutions are seeking to develop their approach, with many stating that this was an area for development, where they were currently seeking to develop KPIs, baselines, and outcome frameworks.

In particular, exploring how HEIs defined the impacts of their P&CE activities proved problematic. Many institutions spoke about the impacts of their work in very general terms. Some implied impacts from their work, but did not provide much detail. Some referenced impacts that others might view as outputs, or related activity. Some chose to focus their impacts internally, whilst others referenced specific impacts of individual activities.

There were also various interpretations of the value of monitoring data, and if and how this can be used to evaluate impacts. Typically, monitoring data relates to things that can be counted, often numbers of participants, and participant demographics. Whilst participant numbers provide valuable data, as a stand alone they don't evidence impact of the P&CE activity participants have been involved in.

Some institutions used their year-on-year monitoring data of participant numbers at university events to evidence that they were attracting new demographics of participants to their events. For those with a strategic desire to reach specific groups, this data proved valuable. However, to evidence the impact of the event on those participants, a broader approach to evaluation would be needed.



Lens 3.1 What are HEIs' broad evaluation approaches?

In our review of the Results and Learning sections seven distinct approaches to evaluating P&CE emerged. Many institutions evidenced one or more of these approaches.

The most compelling returns referenced a strategic approach to evaluation, that sought to evaluate the aims and objectives of the strategy.

For some institutions this had two focal points, one focused on externally facing activities, and the other on internal support.

There were several different approaches in how institutions chose to reflect on their approach to evaluation. We have described seven different approaches below. We found institutions used one or more of these approaches in their narrative statements.

Table 11: Evaluation approach definitions

Evaluation approach	
HEI provides evaluation support for projects	In these cases, institutions emphasised the need to develop evaluation that is appropriate to individual projects, and address the aims of the intervention. These institutions spoke about how they supported staff to develop effective evaluation approaches, rather than the specific approaches used. Institutions had a sophisticated understanding of the value of a range of approaches to evaluation, providing relevant toolkits and/ or training. In some cases the institution evidenced how these individual programme evaluations related to the overall P&CE aims of the institution, and fed into the overarching evaluation of these aims. In other cases, institutions referenced only putting more systematic evaluation in place for potential REF case studies, which were seen to require rigorous data about the impacts generated.
HEI evaluates its support for P&CE	In these cases institutions were looking at their overall approach to cultivating public engagement within their institution. To do this they used a variety of tools including the NCCPE's EDGE tool, which was used to provide a baseline of current practice, and to inform the action plan for their support work. Monitoring data included the numbers of staff and students participating in training; the number who embedded engagement into their grant proposals; and the numbers of partnerships being developed; as well as information about if and how engagement was recognised and rewarded in promotions criteria, development reviews, and institutional awards.
HEI intended to carry out future evaluation	A significant number of institutions wrote that they collected monitoring data from their programmes, but did not currently have as robust an approach to evaluation as they would like. These institutions talked about developing KPIs and outcome frameworks for their institution, and evidencing and evaluating programmes against these. These future evaluation plans spoke to both evidencing and evaluating engagement projects, as well as evaluating and evidencing support for engagement. We noted that future evaluation plans sometimes reflected on the importance of linking evaluation back to the institutions overarching P&CE strategy.



Lens 3.1 What are HEIs' broad evaluation approaches? Cont.

Evaluation approach (cont.)

HEI strategically evaluates its P&CE work	Some institutions had a clear strategic approach to evaluation of their work. Some had developed outcomes frameworks; others had developed specific KPIs to track if and how they were meeting core aims; and others reflected on how the individual programme evaluations linked to the overarching aims and objectives of the institution, but did not detail how this was achieved. There was a sense that to get cut through at a strategic level required some specific numerical indicators, but that the value of the evaluations was often found in the qualitative data that could be collected. This approach was often aligned with support to develop evaluation specific to programmes of work.
HEI uses monitoring data to evidence impact	There was heavy reliance on monitoring data to evidence impacts in the KEF. For many institutions this data echoed standard measures of value in the HE-BCI review, including numbers and demographics of attendees. Several institutions reported this data being of huge value to help them recognise if and how they are achieving aims relating to broadening participation in their activities, using it strategically to evidence the value of the public and community engagement work at the institution. In addition to monitoring information, feedback surveys which assessed whether participants at events had learnt something new or had enjoyed the events were common, suggesting evaluation at the point of intervention was usual practice at these institutions. However there were few reflections on the longer term nature of impacts arising from engagement, and if and how these were evidenced.
HEI references partnership to evidence impact	A prompt for reflection in the KEF guidance was how institutions knew that the P&CE they did was of relevance to those who participated in it. Many institutions chose to reference the partnership work that they were involved in, and how much of their work was informed by these partners. The constant communication between partners was shared as one way of evaluating if and how the institution was being an effective partner, and delivering on activities and outcomes that were of value to those it worked with. Whilst this learning was not formalised, it suggested that there was a significant amount of partner interaction that was influencing the institution.
HEI does not reference an evaluation approach	Several institutions did not reference their evaluation methodologies in the KEF. For some this appeared to be because they hadn't developed an approach. Others chose not to share the 'nuts and bolts' of their approach, but did state a high level, strategic commitment to the process.



Lens 3.2 How do HEIs define the impact of their P&CE?

Before looking at the methodologies used by HEIs to evaluate and monitor the impact of their activities (the focus of the next lens), we wanted to understand if and how HEIs categorised the kinds of impact they expected P&CE activities to realise.

Whilst we found it difficult to identify evidence of the cumulative impacts of P&CE activities, our review highlighted the reported impact categories captured in the graph on the right, and described in more detail on the next page.

Reported impact categories from 'Results and learning' sections, total number of HEIs per category

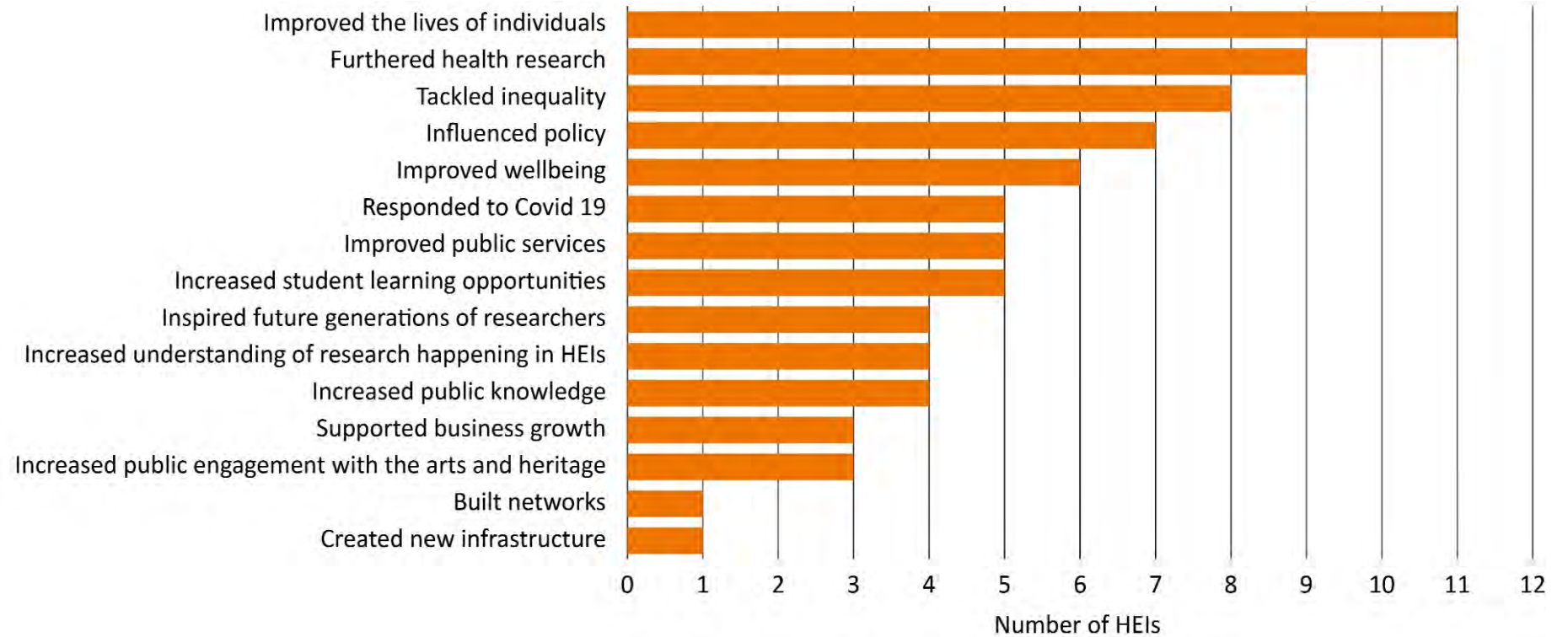


Figure 23: Reported impact categories

Total number=38

Our review only identified 38 HEIs making reference to the impacts of their P&CE activities, which was significantly lower than we had initially expected. This is because many of the 'Results and Learning' sections focused on evaluative metrics but did not identify how these metrics translated into more specific impacts. For example, many HEIs provided an account of the number of public visitors to their campuses for events, however, it was rare for an HEI to identify the impact these visits had on attendees.



Lens 3.2 How do HEIs define the impact of their P&CE? cont.

Table 12: Impact definitions

Impacts	
Improved the lives of individuals	Refers to P&CE activity which led to personal improvements for individuals. This involved health related improvements (e.g., improved eye health or mental wellbeing, improved educational attainment for individual students).
Furthered health research	Relates to P&CE activity which contributes to knowledge in health disciplines.
Tackled inequality	P&CE activity addresses societal inequalities.
Influenced policy	P&CE activity creates/informs policy change.
Improved wellbeing	Refers to P&CE activity which leads to increased wellbeing of a group or community.
Increased student learning opportunities	Relates to P&CE which improves student learning experiences.
Improved public services	P&CE activity creates a wider impact on the quality of public services.
Responded to Covid-19	Refers specifically to P&CE activity that responds to the challenges and needs arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.
Increased public knowledge	P&CE activity results in more public knowledge/understanding around a specific topic.
Increased understanding of research happening in HEIs	Refers to P&CE activity which broadens publics' understanding of HEI research.
Inspired future generations of researchers	P&CE activity inspires people to pursue research studies/careers.
Increased public engagement with the arts and heritage	Results in increased engagement with arts and heritage. Not only increased numbers but also more diverse audiences.
Supported business growth	P&CE activity leads to improved outcomes for businesses.
Created new infrastructure	Refers to P&CE activity which directly leads to new infrastructure e.g., new community facilities.
Built networks	Relates to the way P&CE activity supports the development/strengthening of connections between HEIs and non-HEI partners.



Lens 3.2 How do HEIs define the impact of their P&CE? cont.

As is evident in the 'reported impact categories' chart (page 70), our review did not find high numbers of reported impacts, with the highest impact category, 'improved the lives of individual', only being cited in 11 P&CE narratives.

When we looked at the way HEIs reported on their results and learning we found the majority of institutions provided quantitative monitoring data e.g., participant numbers and demographics.

As described in section 3.1, HEIs used this monitoring data to evaluate different things, most usually events (feedback and satisfaction surveys, attendee numbers) and internal support for engagement (such as number of staff employed in P&CE roles, percentage of research staff time allocated to P&CE activity). For a more detailed discussion on the monitoring of P&CE please see Lens 3.3.

Whilst monitoring data was common, fewer institutions spoke specifically about how their engagement created change, or the scale of those impacts.

Some developed narratives to illustrate their impact. Examples include: developing a network of partners who continue to engage with specific marginalised groups, carrying out activities that lead to improved performance in a number of schools which was evidenced in Ofsted results; leaving a legacy of sustainable activities for children in disadvantaged communities; hosting masterclasses which led to improved understanding of engagement practices in staff and students; conducting participatory research which informed NICE guidance.

The HEIs with the most cohesive 'Results and Learning' sections were those who linked their impacts and result evidence back to their overarching P&CE objectives. Demonstrating this relationship drew the individual activities into a more holistic commentary on the HEI's whole engagement practice and helped to evidence how engagement was embedded at an institutional level.

Case study: examples of strategic evaluation approaches

The University of Exeter's narrative describes how P&CE activities across the institution meet the strategic principles set out in their PER Strategy Principles document, as well as the needs of local and wider society. They build a narrative around how the activities they have chosen to foreground align with their wider strategic commitment to P&CE. For example, their Results and Learning section describes how involving inter-disciplinary research staff and other internal staff and external partners in projects has supported their wider principle to evidence the benefits of P&CE to public and researchers.

The University of Bradford's UKRI funded place-based partnership scheme piloted ways to better engage people whose voices are less frequently heard in health research in order to inform and shape the design and delivery of health services. The project led to the creation of an online portal which more broadly facilitates the involvement of publics in research across the institution. The project has responded to wider strategic priorities of deepening public engagement practice whilst also contributing to further improving the HEI's strategy.





Lens 3.2 How do HEIs define the impacts of their P&CE? cont.

Our review also identified a small number of HEIs who are developing new approaches to evidencing impact which embed greater opportunities for institutional reflectivity and evaluation of local impact.

Case study: developing new approaches to evaluation

One example of this is **Portsmouth University** who reflect on their developing approach to assessing P&CE outcomes in their new P&CE strategy. Portsmouth University set out their new approach, which will involve a measurement, evaluation and learning cycle, intended to gather evidence and learning to be shared across the institution. This new strategy will be used in conjunction with annual assessments of their new Civic University Agreement which includes a 'public test' to see if the institution's civic activity aligns to public need, a 'place test' to examine how the institution is linked to local and regional leadership, and an 'impact test', exploring how the institution can measure the impact of its activity.

Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine highlight the importance of listening and critical reflection in evaluation. Evaluation is conducted by the individuals undertaking PCE activities to evidence how the activity progressed as well as capturing audience feedback, with support from the LSTM PE manager. They assess the impact of the PE activities by collating evidence to demonstrate a potential change in target audience behaviour or learning. Where appropriate,

LSTM also assess impact in international communities using focus groups and workshops within communities (for example with faith healers, clinicians, health support workers and other representatives) and this can occur before, during and following engagement. Community statements are used to gather/evidence these viewpoints.

University of Hertfordshire reflect how sharing their annual review reports amongst community partners has led to new engagement activity. Their narrative sets out how they seek feedback on these reports and use that feedback to inform and develop their strategic engagement approach. One example of how this has recently led to effective public engagement is through their volunteer programme, where the university built on report feedback and supported HEI staff to apply for school/college governor posts. This resulted in 72 HEI staff being recruited into governor roles, deepening the institutions relationship with their education community partners.





Lens 3.2 How do HEIs define the impacts of their P&CE? cont.

Given that only a small number of institutions reported on impacts in their Results and Learning section, we widened the search to explore the 'Activities' sections of the KEF narrative.

Whilst these sections of the narratives focused on specific activities, rather than representing a strategic picture of the institutional approach, the descriptions of impacts in this section was richer, and provided more details of the types of impacts being claimed.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, our review suggests that HEIs found it significantly easier to detail the impacts of specific activities than the cumulative impacts of their engagement practices. There are several things that could account for this:

- Creating an evaluation and monitoring approach at a strategic level, for an area of work that has diverse practices at its heart, is challenging and which few institutions have done so currently.
- The current maturity of the sector in evaluating public and community engagement.
- Large projects often have associated budget and / or requirements to evaluate the engagement work.
- For some institutions the priority is to support staff to develop an appropriate approach to evaluation.

For many institutions, the activities section provided an opportunity to showcase the range of different engagement activities and to demonstrate their ability to engage diverse audiences. Some chose to share monitoring data to illustrate this.

Where there is a clear P&CE strategy to weave the individual activities together, the Results and Learning section is better able to account for the cumulative impact of the institution's engagement. However only a few institutions provided a cohesive account of the cumulative impacts of their engagement activities.

Case study: building a cumulative picture of institutional impact

Canterbury Christ Church University identify using a devolved, project based approach to monitoring, which supports them to evaluate the cumulative impacts of their P&CE activity against their strategic objectives. All local based projects are required to gather qualitative as well as quantitative evaluative insights which are compared against the institution's local objectives and success indicators.





Lens 3.2 How do HEIs define the impacts of their P&CE? cont.

When we looked at the Activity sections of the statements, there was a wealth of examples around how individual projects and activities led to tangible impacts. We include some examples below, organised into four thematic areas: community-based research, patient involvement, policy engagement, and infrastructure development.

Case studies: describing the impacts of P&CE activity

Working with communities on real world challenges

Liverpool John Moores University showcased their Roma Education Aspiration Project (REAP) project which responded to an observed need in Liverpool's Roma community to increase educational attendance. The project involved a collaboration between the university, local community organisations and Roma liaison officers. The project used a range of qualitative methods to engage young people from the Roma community, exploring opportunities and obstacles to educational attendance through performance, film making and social media engagement. The project evaluation highlights improved school attendance for young people who engaged with the REAP project and sets out a set of follow-on activities design to ensure the sustainability of the project.

Bournemouth University's ESRC funded Sexual Spaces project explored the relationship between mega sporting events and their effects on informal economies. The team collaborated with sex workers to co-produce an art exhibition – *What you don't see* – which was displayed in Bournemouth, London, Rio de Janeiro and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Engagement with marginalised groups throughout the project allowed them to challenge misinformation and under-representation.

Including the voices of patients in health research

The University of Hertfordshire highlight how their Centre for Research in Public Health and Community Care (CRIPACC) has worked in partnership with external stakeholders and publics to co-produce health research, engaging 700 people over 23 projects, with a total value of £2.6m. Their P&CE narrative discusses how the centre has also led evaluations of the impact of their public involvement in research and used this to inform best practice.

Similarly, **the University of Worcester** foreground their activities in dementia studies, describing how they work at the interface between those with lived experience of dementia, those developing policy and practice guidance, and those undertaking dementia research. They describe how the team from the University of Worcester have worked with communities to develop Dementia Meeting Centres (DMCs), a community-based intervention intended to support people and families affected by dementia. Their research programme evidenced the effectiveness of the DMC model, enabling the team to secure subsequent funding for 30 more DMC centres to be set up nationally.





Lens 3.2 How do HEIs define the impacts of their P&CE? cont.

The narratives often foreground research activities that involved engagement with policy and local government. This included working with local government departments and representatives and affecting change at a national policy level. Some reference impacts from this work, and we have included a selection below:

Case studies: describing the impacts of P&CE activity

Influencing policy and local government practices

Leeds Beckett University partnered with the Department for Communities and Local Government, National Trust and large house builders to increase the energy efficiency in homes. The project not only impacted the practices of the project partners but led to changes in Building Regulations which reduces heat loss from residential homes. The narrative states how these changes have resulted in a 5 million-ton CO2 saving as well as increased energy efficiency in hundreds and thousands of new build houses.

The University of Central Lancaster reported on a public art research programme which engaged public and community groups to test new approaches to regenerating urban spaces. The programme has built relationships between planners and communities, enabling a more open line of communication about how to develop a more responsive and resilient regeneration model. The programme has led to a series of outcomes which have a long-term impact for the communities and local area. These include the creation of new cultural spaces in the city centre, festivals, and changes to the city's development planning document. Additionally, the programme has been identified as a model of good practice, being shared with international audiences.

Contributing to changes in physical / digital infrastructure

“Wayfinding” was a collaborative project between **Staffordshire University** and Stoke-on-Trent city council. The project engaged local residents to understand how street signage could be more accessible. The project led directly to changes in signage in the local area.

The **University of York** describes a research project working in collaboration with communities in the South Pacific islands of Vanuatu to develop sensors that assess whether water supplies are safe to drink. University researchers have co-created a test sensor which enables communities to switch to alternative drinking water supplies when water is infected with bacteria.





Lens 3.3 How do HEIs monitor and evaluate their P&CE?

Our third lens sought to understand how HEIs **monitor and evaluate** their P&CE work.

This included considering evaluation of individual activity, cumulative impacts from their engagement work, and evaluation of the institution's strategic support for P&CE.

We searched within the Results and Learning sections of the P&CE narrative statements for references made to monitoring, measuring and evaluating. We looked to see if there were common approaches cited.

Approaches to monitoring and evaluating P&CE

A range of approaches were detailed within the returns, including:

- **Event attendees:** number / demographics of attendees at events
- **Feedback and satisfaction levels:** Data gathered from attendees at large events.
- **KPIs:** monitoring against established KPIs usually at an institutional level, but also referenced in project level evaluation.
- **Project monitoring reports:** Projects submit reports which included some monitoring data.
- **Click through monitoring:** Refers to the monitoring of website visits.
- **Social media monitoring:** Refers to monitoring engagement with social media
- **HEBCI monitoring data:** Included data collated as part of HEBCI return, most usually number of attendees.
- **Participant monitoring:** Involves both quantitative and qualitative monitoring of participants experiences. This included surveys, focus groups, and testimony.
- **Monitoring onward journey:** Refers to the monitoring of participants after their engagement with a project/programme.
- **Measured against objectives:** Monitoring of projects against pre-established objectives.
- **Engagement duration:** Refers to the duration of the engagement activity.
- **Front end evaluation:** refers to evaluation done to inform the activity, usually with community organisations
- **External evaluation:** refers to using external evaluators to evaluate specific activities

42 universities specifically referenced one or more of the tools listed in their Results and Learning section. However many more presented the outputs from the monitoring and evaluation, which implied use of specific approaches, although the specific tools weren't referenced.



Lens 3.3 How do HEIs monitor and evaluate their P&CE? cont.

Across the Results and Learning sections we found that HEIs monitored the impact of their P&CE engagement in two different ways:

- Monitoring the stand-alone impacts of specific activities, often against the HEI's P&CE strategy, and
- Evaluating the cumulative impact of the range of P&CE activity taking place across the institution, from both specific projects and wider institutional inputs into P&CE.

In addition, some provided information about how they evaluated their support for P&CE, described later in the chapter.

Project specific monitoring:

The most commonly referenced approaches to project monitoring were recording event attendee numbers and seeking feedback and satisfaction levels from event attendees.

A typical example from Oxford Brookes University refers to their Think Human Festival in 2020:

There were over 2,000 attendees in 2020. Feedback was recorded from nearly 300 attendees of whom 88% gave the highest possible satisfaction rating and 92% intended to return to a future event.

Project reports were also often referenced as a monitoring approach. This included reporting on projects for funders as well as annual reports produced centrally. Some HEIs spoke of how they compared reported impacts and outcomes against the initial project objectives.

HEIs mentioned using participant monitoring as part of their evaluation strategy. This included reporting testimony from non-HEI project partners and project participants, as well as surveying participants. Testimony was most commonly used to provide narrative to co-produced projects; however, it also provided an additional level of depth when used to capture the reflections of project partners.

A small number of institutions referred to focus groups run with partners e.g., community organisations, to inform and reflect on their approach.

Wider monitoring:

Once again, attendee or participant numbers at HEI events were often cited and were one of the KPIs institutions used to monitor their progress. These numbers were routinely collected for HEBCIS returns, enabling institutions to reflect on if and how attendee numbers had grown over time.

BU2025 KPIs include societal impact measures, such as attendance at public events. Key P&CE initiatives regularly report to ULT which monitors BU2025 progress.

Bournemouth University

HEIs also described measuring the impacts and outcomes of their engagement practice against KPIs at an institutional or project level, which included:

- the number and scope of communities engaged;
- number of external grants awarded that include P&CE;
- HEBCIS data;
- stakeholder, community and user voice;
- number of students engaged in P&CE;
- volunteer hours.

Annual reports also featured in the monitoring of a HEI's engagement footprint. These reports look at the scale and scope of P&CE activity over a one-year period.

Other methods of monitoring engagement at a wider scale included numbers engaging with webpages, or social media; and monitoring of staff and student time allocated to P&CE.



Lens 3.3 How do HEIs monitor and evaluate their P&CE? cont.

Reflections on monitoring in the KEF statements

Institutions who presented the most robust and strategic monitoring and evaluation processes were those that drew on both project and wider monitoring. Some narratives described evaluation approaches that were creative and systematic. Some examples of these approaches can be seen in the following case studies.

Case study: monitoring P&CE activity

The University of Brighton sets out its dynamic approach to evaluation which draws on quantitative and qualitative approaches. In addition to more conventional qualitative evaluation methods University of Brighton also draws on creative methods, such as film making. Their framework for evaluation encourages staff to embed evaluation in the design and delivery of a project, ensuring monitoring not only enables the institution to understand the scale of their engagement activity but that it also responds to the needs of partners.

Guildhall School of Music and Drama presents a systematic approach to monitoring in their Results and Learning section. The narrative sets out a range of different approaches to monitoring depending on the type of project/programme. For example- projects included in their strategic plan follow project matrix measures; early stage large-scale projects have pre-established project initialisation metrics; delivery stage projects are measured against performance metrics agreed between internal leads and external partners; and longitudinal programmes use long term monitoring of ongoing impact. Monitoring methods include quantitative metrics as well as qualitative interviewing, focus groups and surveys.

Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance describes how they draw simultaneously on quantitative metrics and testimony. Their approach to monitoring is led by a research staff member for whom evaluating P&CE is their primary role. This staff member uses a mixed method approach to understand the impact of Trinity Laban's public programmes. The Results and Learning section identifies the importance of using testimony and more traditional metrics to understand how P&CE activity aligns with strategic aims as well as mapping the scale and scope of their P&CE footprint.





Lens 3.3 How do HEIs monitor and evaluate their P&CE? cont.

We also explored how institutions explained their approach to evaluating their support for P&CE.

To do this we looked in the Activities, Results and Learning and Acting on Results sections.

Monitoring institutional support for P&CE

Whilst most of the evaluation approaches referenced in the Results and Learning section were focused on the evaluation of P&CE activities, some reflected on how they were evaluating their support for P&CE internally.

Table 13: Monitoring approach – P&CE support

Support for P&CE - monitoring approaches	
Institution wide review of P&CE	Eight institutions specifically reflected on a wide scale review of all P&CE activity, often carried out by external evaluators Thirty one HEIs referenced using the NCCPE's EDGE tool to self-ass their support for P&CE
Income generating through PER	Six referenced the monitoring of the income generated through research involving public engagement
Quality and number of publications	Three referenced the number and quality of publications coming out of P&CE projects
Monitoring staff PE	Six referenced the number of staff hours dedicated to P&CE activity



Lens 3.4 How do HEIs learn from and build upon their monitoring and evaluation?

In this final lens, we were interested to what extent the narratives evidence how HEIs are using monitoring and evaluation to improve their P&CE practice.

By looking in the Results and Learning and Acting on Results sections of the narratives we were able to identify two different approaches: using learning to inform future projects, and using learning to increase P&CE capacity within the HEI.

Learning from monitoring and evaluation processes

Those institutions with robust monitoring and evaluation processes tended to use both of these learning approaches. Case study examples of these different approaches can be seen below:

Case studies

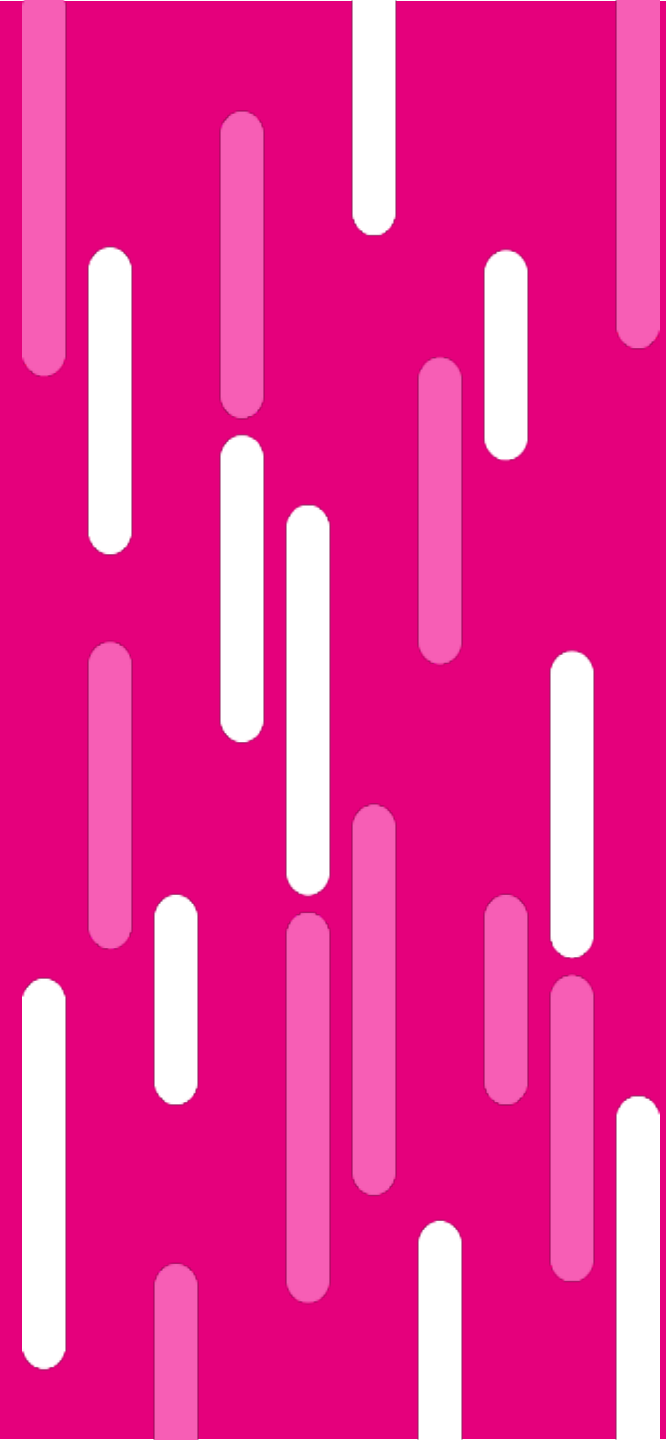
The University of Essex sets out how it builds on its monitoring and evaluation in the Acting on Results section of their P&CE narrative. Interdisciplinary working groups identify ways of building on the institution's P&CE work, as well as identifying how to overcome structural and systemic challenges to P&CE activity.

The University of Brighton highlight the importance of virtual spaces for collaborating with partners to evaluate their practice and decide how to build up the learning generated through evaluative activities. They highlight the importance of these online social learning spaces, particularly in light the Covid-19 pandemic.

Imperial College identifies the importance of distributing knowledge gathered through evaluations and monitoring with internal students and staff. Their narrative highlights how sharing this knowledge builds staff capacity and supports more effective engagement activity which leads to better meeting the needs of the public.



Chapter 4: The context for Public and Community Engagement





4. The context for Public & Community Engagement

Headlines

- Public and Community Engagement features as a significant thread in both the IC and LG&R narratives, with many HEIs foregrounding publics and communities as important 'stakeholders' in their work and identifying the pursuit of public benefit as a core strategic imperative.
- Many HEIs frame their approach to KE as a route to generating social, cultural and economic renewal, with a focus on inclusion and on local and regional connections and impact.
- Rather than approaching different strands of KE (Local growth, institutional strategy, P&CE) as separate domains, HEIs are increasingly approaching them in a holistic and integrated way.
- In this context, the P&CE narratives clarify how HEIs are enhancing their professional support to better meet the needs, interests and expectations of the public, and in the process enhancing their overarching social mission to 'make a difference' in their communities.
- This has resulted in a rich picture of the diversity of approaches and philosophies animating HEI practice, but also a significant amount of overlap across the KEF narratives. There are also some significant gaps and absences in the evidence and insight that is being captured, which would benefit from further attention.

Overview of this section:

In this brief final chapter, we step back from the P&CE narratives, and contextualise them by a light-touch review of the other narratives submitted by HEIs:

- The Institutional Context statements (IC)
- The Local Growth and Regeneration (LG&R) narratives

We were interested to explore if and how consideration of publics, communities, and engagement with them, featured in these other parts of the KEF. In particular, we were interested to see if and how publics and communities are referenced in the ways HEIs describe their overarching approach to KE (the institutional context); and what (if any) overlaps there were between P&CE and LG&R.

Lenses used in this section

- How does Public and Community Engagement feature in other KEF domains?
- Reflections on the implications for the P&CE narratives



Lens 4.1 How does P&CE feature in other KEF domains?

To get a relatively crude, broad-brush picture of how HEIs are framing their approach to KE, we used a word frequency search of the text submitted in the Institutional Context summary statements, in order to identify themes and focal points. We removed words which were not relevant to the processes or practices or KE (for instance reference to specific place names, or numbers).

29 HEIs made explicit reference to public and community engagement as a core component of their approach.

Reviewing Institutional Context statements: a locally engaged sector, focused on a broad range of social and economic outcomes



The picture that emerges (captured in the word cloud) is of a sector committed to local and regional impact; with a balance of preoccupations, including interaction with business and the economy, but also emphasising social and community benefits.

We also read and reviewed the short Institutional Context summaries that each HEI was invited to produce to characterise their approach. It was notable that **82 HEIs made reference to the importance of their community connections**. They referenced their civic or place-anchoring role; their relationship with public and community stakeholders; and their commitment to inclusivity.

Figure 24: Institutional context statement word cloud



Lens 4.1 How does P&CE feature in other KEF domains? Cont.

Reviewing Institutional Context statements: the contribution of P&CE

We identified two typical ways in which HEIs described their commitments to Public and Community Engagement in their Institutional Context statements.

P&CE as a priority strand of KE activity

Here HEIs chose to explicitly reference P&CE as a key feature of their overall approach to KE. This framing is closely linked to the evolving set of policies and practices which focus on **Public Engagement with Research**. Examples include:

‘Cranfield University is a specialist institution which combines a deep understanding of technology, entrepreneurship and leadership training. Cranfield actively champions public engagement with STEM subjects by using its facilities, knowledge and training.’

‘The Royal College of Music harnesses and exploits the potential of its communities of musicians, educators, production professionals, public artistic programme, community outreach work and its physical and digital resources to support excellent research. Knowledge exchange in the KEF context has been thematically grouped into:

- Music for all
- Music and innovation
- Engaging the public with music research’

‘At The University of Manchester we contribute to knowledge exchange across the full range of our core objectives of excellence and impact in research, teaching and social responsibility including through involving the public and our community in our work via our award-winning cultural institutions which a museum, an art gallery, a heritage library and the UNESCO World Heritage Site at the Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope.’

P&CE woven into a place-focused approach to knowledge exchange

Here HEIs frame their P&CE in terms of a commitment to local communities and to place. This framing draws on the long traditions of community and civic engagement, and tend to encompass a broader range of practices and approaches than PE with Research. Examples include:

‘The University of West London, the Career University, is integral to our local economy and community. Our partnerships with industry and community provides students with skills, expertise and networks to create a talent pipeline that supports the local economy. [] In everything we do, we endeavour to involve local communities and play an active part in the educational, cultural and economic life of our region.’

‘Coventry University Group (CUG) has a distinguished history working locally, nationally and internationally to embed collaboration and maximise results with and for partners. []. Local growth and community engagement are focused on the core needs of local citizens: - health inequalities, unemployment and developing holistic and targeted community support for longer term societal advancement and inclusive growth.’

‘York St John University (YSJU) has been educating and engaging with our local, regional and wider community since 1841. Located in the city centre, we are a genuinely ‘community university’, with a pivotal role in York’s social, economic and cultural prosperity, and its international relationships and reputation.’

‘The University of Brighton is renowned for engaging with the cultural, social and economic life of the communities in which we live, work and study. [] Community engagement, SME innovation and public sector skills programmes are distinctive strengths. Together with our partners, we are committed to regeneration to deliver mutual benefit for our region and beyond, improving people’s lives and environment.’



Lens 4.1 How does P&CE feature in other KEF domains? Cont.

We then reviewed the summaries produced for the Local Growth and Regeneration narratives, to explore the potential overlaps with the Public and Community Engagement narratives.

We were interested in the extent to which the summary framing statements overlapped with territory also captured in the Public and Community narratives.

In particular, we were interested in the extent to which the LG&R narratives were focused on economic growth and productivity, or framed the territory more broadly to encompass broader social, cultural and community-focused outcomes.

Local Growth and Regeneration: Business and prosperity focused – but often much more



The word frequency search of the full LG&R narratives reveals a clear focus on business and growth (in the bold words in the centre). But once you move outside these, the penumbra of terms reveals a range of additional activity and focal points, including a strong interest in communities and in social and cultural impacts. This echoes our earlier discussion, where we explored why it was that Business and Industry was frequently referenced in the P&CE narratives (Lens 1.6). We noted the number of HEIs emphasising their commitment to inclusive growth, and to realising economic benefits for their local communities.

Figure 25: LG&R word cloud



Lens 4.1 How does P&CE feature in other KEF domains? Cont.

Local Growth and Regeneration (cont.)

When we then read through and coded the summaries, we found slightly less than half of the narratives (54) were tightly focused on work with business to support economic growth. The **University of Plymouth's** is typical of this approach:

'The University of Plymouth makes a significant impact on its local economy, reflecting its roots in the City of Plymouth, and its cultural connection to our local industries and communities. We are key strategic partners in our City and the wider region, informing local economic strategies and working in partnership to support the development of key growth sectors and broader innovation across the business community'.

The other 63 narratives encompassed a broader framing of their contribution to Local Growth and Regeneration. They described working with a variety of local actors, including community / voluntary sector, to effect wider changes to social and economic wellbeing.

49 explicitly referenced the importance of publics and communities in this area; 32 emphasised their civic or anchoring role; 21 foregrounded social inclusion as a priority. As a consequence, these narratives contained significant overlap (and some duplication) of the content contained in their P&CE narratives. Newman University noted *"There is a high level of synergy across our approach to public and community engagement and local growth and regeneration"*.

Lancaster University's summary is an example of a framing which includes the economic, but pushes the boundaries of this to encompass a broader range of social goals:

'Lancaster University's vision of being a globally significant university is entirely consistent with our concomitant civic responsibility as a local anchor institution focussed on facilitating regional economic and societal change. Partnership and collaboration are core to Lancaster University's operational ethos and our industrial hinterland has unquestionably driven our focus on integration with regional SMEs. Through this symbiotic partnership, we contribute actively to societal, cultural and economic development by engaging with partners to support innovation through KE collaborations that are mutually beneficial. Our published Strategic Plan reinforces our commitment to "Lead on renewal and growth of our local community to create value for Lancaster and the North West region, including the enhancement of cultural assets, physical infrastructure, health and economic development'.



Lens 4.2 Reflections on the implications for the P&CE narratives

Stepping back from the P&CE narratives and looking at them in the context of other parts of the KEF has been revealing.

Our review has revealed a sector that is increasingly focused on clarifying and communicating its **social purpose**.

The importance of connecting with publics and communities is now acting as a 'big idea' to describe the overarching ambition of many HEIs, often linked to a growing focus on 'place' and on their civic role.

The invitation to submit P&CE narratives has allowed HEIs to articulate their distinctive approaches to delivering on this ambition. It has also helped to highlight that there are some interesting differences in how HEIs approach 'Public' and 'Community' engagement.

Public or Community Engagement?

'Public' and 'Community' engagement were yoked together in the framing of the P&CE perspective, but in practice seemed to point to two rather different orientations and approaches to engaging with citizens.

The evidence from the KEF suggests that we are currently witnessing a very productive 'coming together' and alignment of these different traditions. It also reveals some interesting 'blurring of boundaries' as HEIs work out how best to frame and focus their Public and Community Engagement, and some challenges around defining the scope of P&CE.

Public engagement tends to be interpreted by the sector as activity to increase and enhance the interaction between researchers and wider society. As such, it is a relatively recent area of policy interest, and relatively narrow in its focus. It has been particularly prevalent in research intensive universities due to the strong incentives offered by research funders over the last 10 years. The NCCPE's work has been closely associated with this area. We offer an example of this framing below:

'Cranfield University is a specialist institution which combines a deep understanding of technology, entrepreneurship and leadership training. Cranfield actively champions public engagement with STEM subjects by using its facilities, knowledge and training.'

Community engagement speaks to a broader set of policy objectives, practices and goals, with a longer history and perhaps with greater overlap with how other sectors have sought to address the needs and interests of citizens and communities. The approach might be characterised as prioritising place-based and community-led or informed policies and practices. The NCCPE has also sought to support developments in this arena. This community-focused orientation has gained significant traction recently with the rise of the Civic Agenda, which we have seen featuring extensively in the KEF narratives. Many HEIs incorporated community engagement into their approach to Local Growth and Regeneration. For example:

'Coventry University Group (CUG) has a distinguished history working locally, nationally and internationally to embed collaboration and maximise results with and for partners. []. Local growth and community engagement are focused on the core needs of local citizens: - health inequalities, unemployment and developing holistic and targeted community support for longer term societal advancement and inclusive growth.'



Lens 4.2 Reflections on the implications for the P&CE narratives cont.

Whilst the KEF narratives are inevitably a partial insight into how HEIs are working to realise social benefit, they are a rich source of data.

However, the varying ways in which HEIs chose to share data; the gaps and absences; the different language and framings; and the blurring of boundaries between different sections and different narratives make it difficult, at times, to fully grasp exactly what is being described.

What we did note, however, is that ultimately, every HEI seemed to be painting from a similar palate. The framework on the right is a summary of the components which HEIs were drawing on, with different emphases, across the three narratives that they submitted.

As the KEF evolves, there might be value in trying to develop such a framework to help clarify the complexity, refine the scope of P&CE, and to accelerate the sharing of effective practice.

Framing their focus

What's the 'big idea' animating their approach to KE?

Enterprise and entrepreneurship

- Supporting innovation
- Supporting entrepreneurship
- Creating jobs

Social innovation & inclusion

- Focus on wellbeing of communities / individuals
- Whole system working
- Promoting equality and inclusion

Supporting place making

- Investing in the cultural life of region
- Regeneration
- Investing in environmental improvement and sustainability

Capacity building and skills

- Addressing skills/talent needs of the region
- Enhancing life chances for citizens
- Enhancing professional practice
- Developing their students

Blended approach

- No one defining frame – pick and mix from several

Approach

How do they approach the delivery of their Knowledge Exchange?

Knowledge: Approach to mobilising knowledge

'Supply' focus

- Disseminating knowledge widely
- Delivering knowledge based solutions
- Expert advice / consultancy
- Enhancing talent and skills

'Demand' focus

- Taking a needs-led approach
- Inter/multi-disciplinary thematic programmes
- Co-creating new knowledge and solutions

'Knowledge' focus

- Discipline-led
- Inter/multi-disciplinary thematic programmes

Exchange: Approach to working in partnership

- With business & industry
- With social businesses / SMEs
- With public authorities and services
- With the cultural sector
- With community and voluntary sector
- With charities / third sector
- With schools / FE
- With publics / communities

Place focus

- Location foregrounded in the narrative
- Place not foregrounded

Making a difference

How do they frame the goals of their KE activity?

Responding to society's needs

- Local and regional needs
- National needs / government priorities
- Global challenges

Transforming lives

- Skills development
- Strengthening communities
- Health and well-being

Environmental impact

- Place making
- Sustainability and climate

Cultural impact

- Enhancing cultural sector / provision
- Increasing participation

Addressing inequality

- Gender
- Race / ethnicity
- Poverty / exclusion / inclusive growth

Economic growth

- Local and regional economy
- National & global economy
- Inclusive growth
- Addressing skills gaps

Figure 26: KE summary framework



Lens 4.2 Reflections on the implications for the P&CE narratives cont.

A final point for reflection concerns the contribution of P&CE to all areas of Knowledge Exchange.

We have noted throughout the report examples of how P&CE is increasingly being integrated with other forms of external engagement (for instance with business; and with their Local Growth and Regeneration work).

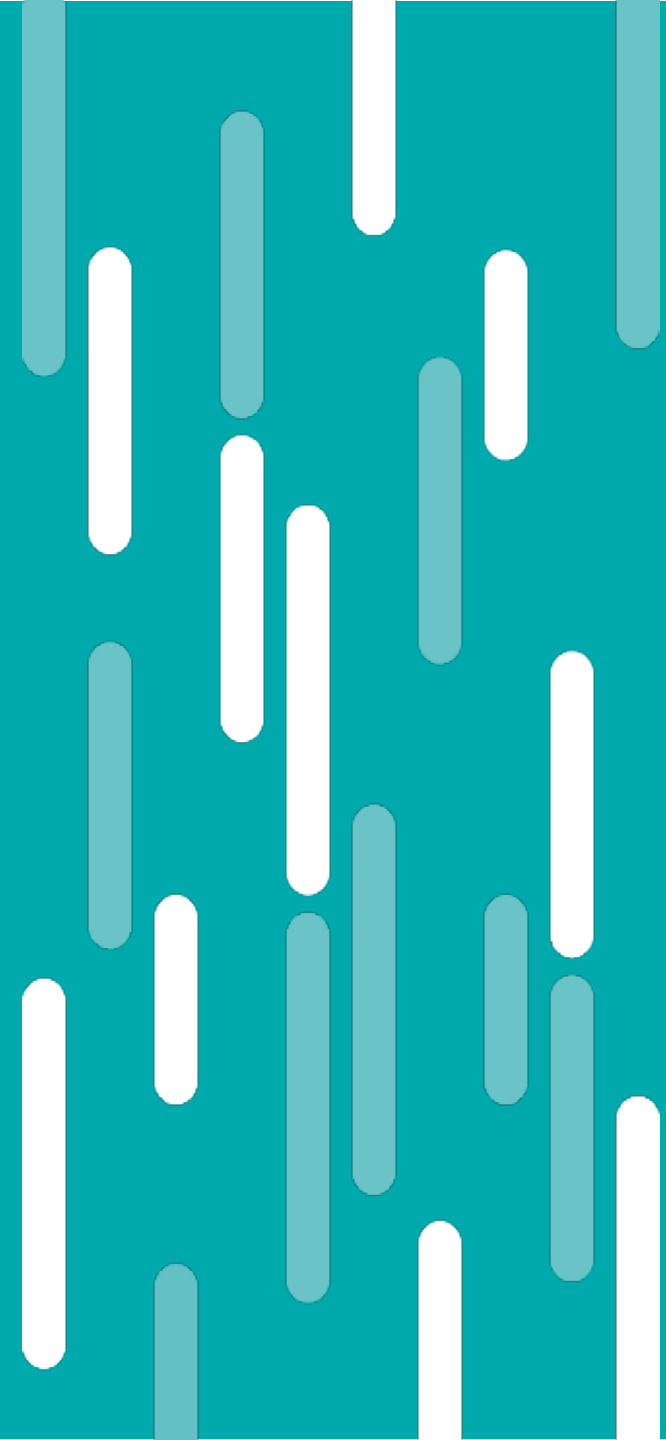
The table on the right identifies specific ways in which P&CE activity contributes to all six of the other KEF perspectives.

This may be a helpful way for HEIs to consider how to maximise the contribution of their P&CE and to embed it strategically across their work.

Table 14: Contribution of P&CE to all areas of Knowledge Exchange

Perspective	Contribution of Public and Community Engagement
Research partnerships	Enhancing public participation in research... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By supporting the public to engage with and get involved in research, for a variety of purposes
Working with business	Promoting social innovation... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By actively involving customers, consumers and audiences in the development of new products and services Development of social enterprises and social entrepreneurship
Working with the public and third sector	Strengthening the public sphere... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By involving service users in the enhancement of public services (e.g. PPI) Animating citizen engagement with arts and culture
Skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship	Increasing human and social capital... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By investing in community skills development and lifelong learning 'Engaged learning' to develop graduates' awareness of and interaction with communities
IP and commercialisation	Enhancing open innovation... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging open source products and platforms Supporting open innovation processes
Local growth and regeneration	Place making and civic responsibility... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By engaging with vulnerable or disadvantaged communities By opening up facilities for community use
Public & Community Engagement	Taking a strategic approach to maximising public benefit arising from KE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By creating a KE environment that maximises high quality public and community engagement activity

Chapter 5: Draft indicators



Draft indicators



Our review provided an opportunity to focus in on the scale and scope of the P&CE footprint across 117 HEIs, within the context of the KEF.

As part of this we have been able to identify ways in which HEIs sought to share evidence within the narratives to demonstrate an institution's commitment to P&CE activity. From these, we have derived a set of indicators to inform future iterations of the KEF.

These indicators very much accord with the focal points set out in the NCCPE's [Edge Tool](#).

These might be useful in helping to frame and focus future narrative submissions.

Whilst these should not be seen as a tick box list, they provide useful prompts for reflection.

Draft indicators

The following three slides include examples of the indicators which we derived from the narratives, and which provide useful, concrete evidence of the steps HEIs are taking to support P&CE effectively. This is in no way an exhaustive list, but we think it provides a useful framework to allow the sector to consider the scope of P&CE work within the HE sector, and how it might be described 'in action'.

Further work is needed to develop a framework to support the sector to realise the potential of their work and to evidence it effectively.

Whatever the approach, we think it will be important to consider a mix of qualitative reporting and specific data points.

The EDGE tool

	Focus	EMBRYONIC	DEVELOPING	GRIPPING	EMBEDDING
Purpose	Mission	There is little or no reference to public engagement in the organisational mission or in other institution-wide strategies.	Public engagement is referenced sporadically within the institutional mission documents and strategies, but is not considered a priority area.	Public engagement is clearly referenced within the institutional mission and strategies and the institution is developing an institution-wide strategic approach.	Public engagement 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.
	Leadership	Few (if any) of the most influential leaders in the institution serve as champions for public engagement.	Some of the institution's senior team act as informal champions for public engagement.	Some of the institution's senior team act as formal champions for public engagement.	The Vice Chancellor acts as a champion for public engagement 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.
	Communication	The institution's commitment to public engagement is rarely, if ever, featured in internal or external communications.	Public engagement occasionally features in internal and external communications.	Public engagement frequently features in internal communications, but rarely as a high-profile item or with an emphasis on its strategic importance.	Public engagement appears prominently in the institution's internal communications; its strategic importance is highlighted, and resources and strategic support have been allocated to sustain this.
Process	Support	There is no attempt to co-ordinate public engagement activity or to network learning and expertise across the institution.	There are some informal attempts being made to co-ordinate public engagement activities, but there is no strategic plan for this work. Some self-forming networks exist, not supported by the institution.	Oversight and co-ordination of public engagement has been formally allocated (e.g. to a working group or committee) but there is minimal support and resource to invest in activity.	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 public engagement. There are a number of recognised and supported networks.
	Learning	There is little or no opportunity for staff or students to access professional development to develop their skills and knowledge of public engagement.	There are some opportunities for staff or students to access professional development and training in public engagement, but no formal or systematic support.	There are some formal opportunities for staff or students to access professional development and training in public engagement.	Staff and students are encouraged and supported in accessing professional development, training and informal learning to develop their skills and knowledge of engagement.
	Recognition	Staff are not formally rewarded or recognised for their public engagement activities.	Some departments recognise and reward public engagement activity on an ad hoc basis.	The university is working towards an institution-wide policy for recognising and rewarding public engagement activity.	The university has reviewed its processes, and developed a policy to ensure public engagement is rewarded and recognised in formal and informal ways.
People	Staff	Few if any opportunities exist for staff to get involved in public engagement, either informally, or as part of their formal duties.	There are opportunities for staff in a handful of faculties or departments to get involved in public engagement, either informally or as part of their formal duties.	There are structured opportunities for many staff members to get involved in public engagement, but not in all faculties or departments. There is a drive to expand opportunities to all.	All staff have the opportunity to get involved in public engagement, and are encouraged and supported to do so. The institution offers both formal and informal ways to recognize and reward their involvement.
	Students	Few opportunities exist for students to get involved in public engagement, either informally, through volunteering programmes, or as part of the formal curriculum.	There are opportunities for students to get involved in public engagement and to begin to tackle access issues to open up the institution and its activities to the public.	Many (but not all) students have the opportunity to get involved in public engagement and are encouraged and supported to do so. There is a drive to expand opportunities to all.	All students have the opportunity to get involved in public engagement, and are encouraged and supported to do so. The institution offers both formal and informal ways to recognize and reward their involvement.
	Public	Little or no attempt has been made to assess community need, or to support 'non-traditional' groups in engaging with the institution.	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.	The institution has committed resources to assessing community need and interests, and to using this insight and feedback to inform its strategy and plans.	The institution has assessed need and committed resources to supporting a wide range of groups to access its facilities and activities, and to systematically seek their feedback and involvement.

Figure 27: The NCCPE [EDGE tool](#) – a tool to assess institutional support for public engagement



Strategy: draft indicators

The first set of indicators identify specific examples of how institutions can evidence a strategic approach to supporting public and community engagement. For each indicator, it would be possible to identify the kinds of evidence that might be submitted, and we provide an example on the right.

Table 15: Draft Strategy indicators

Strategy	Indicators
The institution has developed a strategic approach to delivering their P&CE activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a strategic approach in place with a clear rationale and scope.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategy is informed by consultation with staff, partners and communities, and addresses identified needs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategy sets out aims/objectives/goals of P&CE.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategy identifies priority publics and partners and a rationale for involving them.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an operational plan in place, and resources have been allocated to deliver the strategy.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is clear internal accountability, with a senior leader taking overarching responsibility.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is regular and systematic reporting on the activity and its impact, with agreed KPIs.

Evidence

Below, we include an example of the kind of evidence that might be submitted for the 'consultation' indicator: a graphic summarising the three-stage approach Brighton used to create their 2021/22 P&CE strategy.

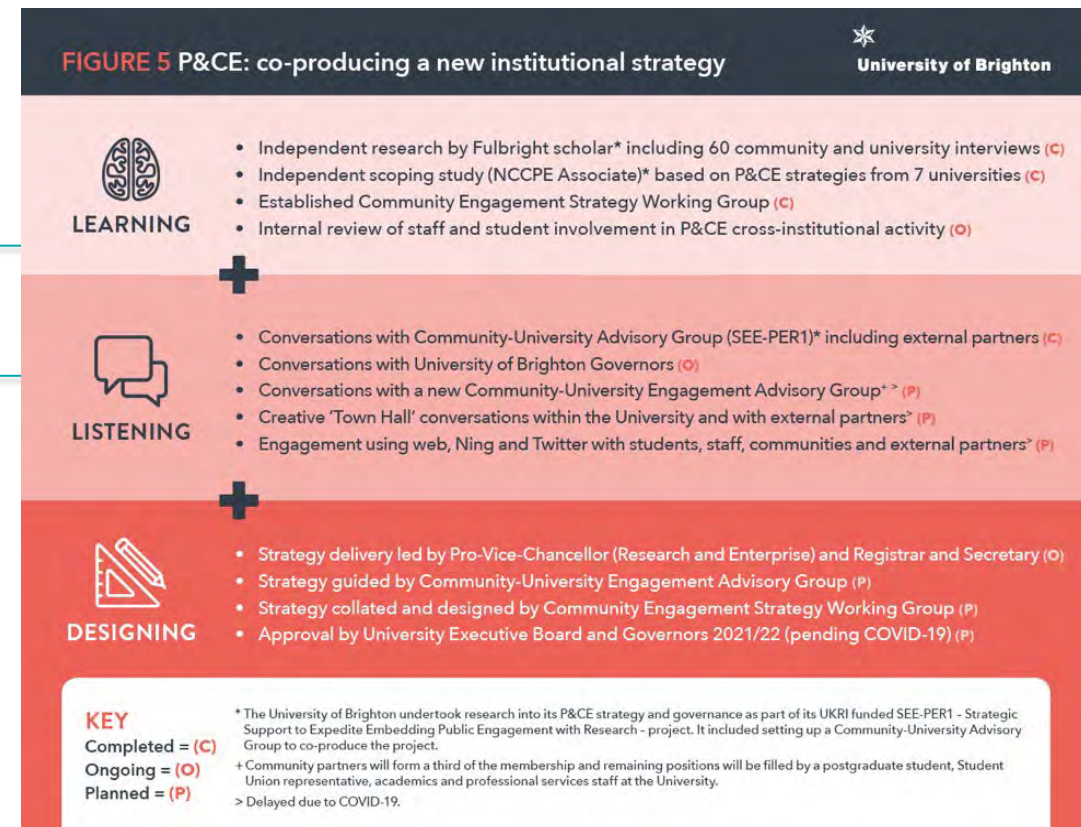


Figure 28: University of Brighton's approach to consultation



Support: draft indicators

Table 16: Draft Support indicators

Support	Indicators	Indicators (cont.)
The institution has invested in practical support for public and community engagement, to facilitate staff, student and public involvement.	There are specialist staff employed to provide support and advice.	Staff and students have access to tools, guides and resources to support PE activity.
	There are promotion / career pathways to support progression which are well used.	HEI systems (e.g. finance) are set up to support P&CE.
	P&CE is included in workload.	The HEI is considering the ethics of P&CE and has processes to deal with ethical issues that need consideration/might arise.
	P&CE is included in performance and development reviews.	HEI has a well-supported internal P&CE community e.g., interdisciplinary networks.
	P&CE is recognised in awards and prizes (internal and external).	There is a formal process to address and monitor EDI.
	Opportunities to develop P&CE skills through training / CPD are offered.	Community is enabled to access and make use of facilities and assets (e.g., sporting and cultural) with opportunities clearly signposted.
	HEI has P&CE public advisory or governance roles.	There is an effective process for communities to establish contact with staff and to have their enquiries dealt with promptly.
	Staff are supported to access P&CE funding and embed it in grant applications.	There is a systematic approach to partnership working which includes a published set of partnership principles addressing issues such as payment, IP, equity and sustainability.
	Seed funding is available to staff to do P&CE.	



Activities and Results: draft indicators

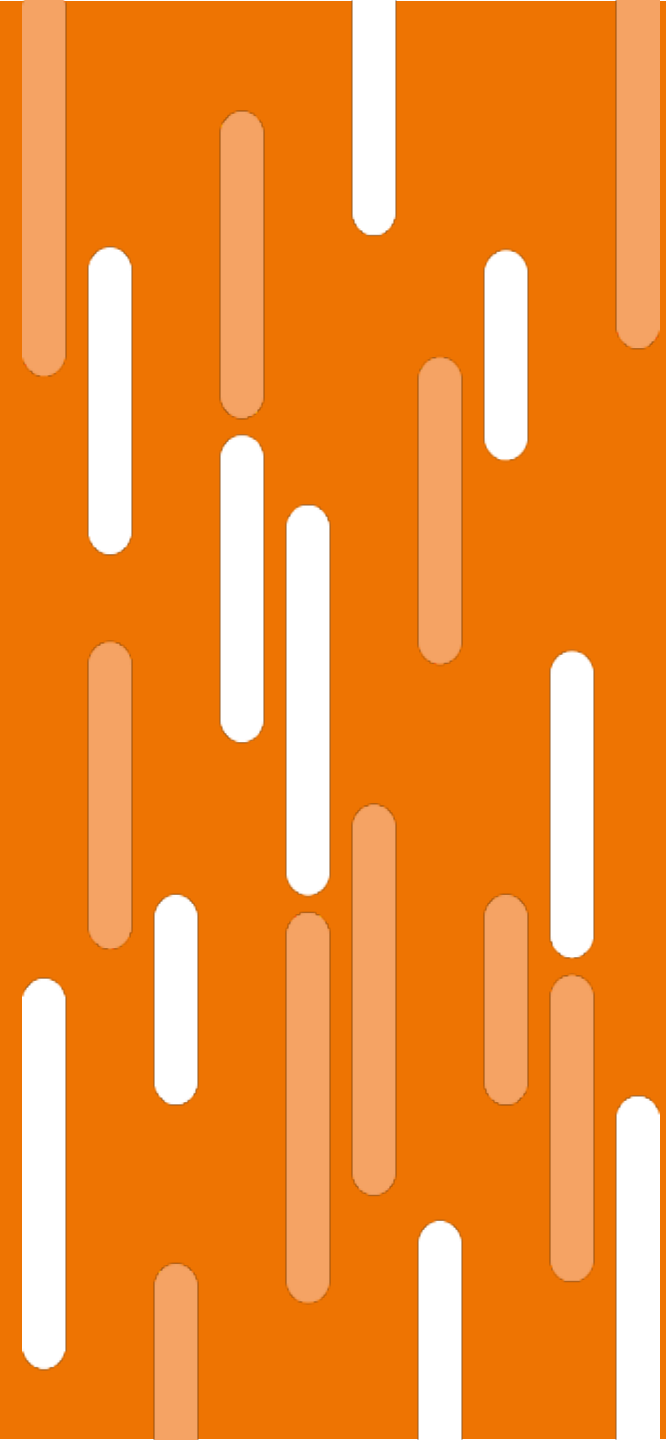
Table 17: Draft Activities indicators

Activities	Indicators
The institution provides a range of opportunities for publics and communities to engage with the institution's teaching and research, and to benefit from their assets and facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activities have clearly defined purposes, and include opportunities for publics and communities to contribute actively to the creation and sharing of knowledge.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is made clear how the activities described relate to the HEI's strategic aims/objectives.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is made clear how the activities respond to identified community / public needs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEI provides robust evidence of outcomes (e.g., the impact of activities on specific stakeholders, how the learning is informing change).

Table 18: Draft Results indicators

Results	Indicators
Mechanisms are in place to ensure the quality, impact and responsiveness of P&CE, and to communicate and act on learning about 'what works'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEI has clear mechanisms in place to ensure their P&CE strategy and activities are monitored and evaluated, and that these results are shared and acted on through robust accountability mechanisms.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEI commits budget to monitoring and evaluating its P&CE and provides specialist support for this.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEI uses evaluation data to enhance their P&CE practice, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the P&CE strategy and support.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEI has outcome frameworks/KPIs against which to evaluate their work, and these relate back to the aims and objectives identified in their strategy.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring involves a range of qualitative and quantitative considerations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEI seeks feedback from students, staff and publics.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEI considers the cumulative impact of their P&CE activity and identifies the impact of P&CE at an institutional/group/ project scale.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEI reports on impact of their activities to key stakeholders.

Final reflections





Learning from the KEF review 2020-21

Final reflections and conclusions

The KEF P&CE narratives provide useful intelligence about how HEIs are framing and supporting their P&CE work. The sector responded to the invitation in a thoughtful way, providing valuable insights into their varied approaches. Whilst in the self-assessment scores, when judged against the evidence provided, some institutions were too harsh, and others too generous, the majority scored themselves realistically. The NCCPE's reflections on how HEIs approached the self-assessment process are reported in Research England's [Review of the first iteration of the Knowledge Exchange Framework \(2022\)](#), pages 53 – 63.

The commitment suggested by the narratives is encouraging, and there is clearly valuable P&CE working being done across the sector. At the time of writing (early 2022), the focus on social purpose, and the civic lens to this work, seem to have breathed new energy into the sector, and there are indications that the role of P&CE in policy will continue to be supported – with the renewed focus on P&CE at the heart of the mission of UKRI, and a recognition of the importance of P&CE as a route to impact, assessed through the REF. That at least 50 universities have committed to developing a Civic University Agreement is encouraging, although this work is still developing. The Knowledge Exchange Concordat has encouraged HEIs to develop action plans to support effective KE, with P&CE a core part of this commitment.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns should not be underestimated, and the work done by universities in their places during the pandemic has been evidence of their commitment to their communities. That the KEF was being undertaken in the midst of this context, provides a useful framing that should be taken into account.

Whilst there is much to be encouraged by, there is also a lot more work needing to be done if P&CE is to deliver its full potential. Notable areas of development are around how P&CE can contribute to the strategic aims of the institution; how HEIs can better develop and sustain their work with communities at a local, national, and international scale; and how this work can be evaluated and the impacts and/ or value better understood.

There is also work to be done in considering the next iteration of the KEF, and how P&CE narratives might be strengthened. Whilst indicators may help, it will be important to not constrain the sector, or unduly favour some approaches over others. The instrumental use of indicators within the sector could undermine the work being undertaken. However, there are some consistent features across those institutions whose P&CE work is delivering strategic value to their communities, and their staff and students, and these could provide helpful focal points for other HEIs to consider when reviewing their approach.

The challenge of measuring the value of the P&CE work done by universities should not be underestimated. Despite this, the sector has risen to the challenge and the KEF P&CE narratives have provided a rich data source, and an opportunity for HEIs to share evidence of what they are doing. There are early indications that this has helped many HEIs reevaluate what they are doing and seek to support their P&CE KE activity more strategically. This is to be celebrated and built upon.



Learning from the KEF review 2020-21

What next?

We hope that this report, and the frameworks we have developed to make sense of the narratives, will provide useful triggers for ongoing development of our collective work in public and community engagement. We look forward to robust debate about these findings, and the opportunity to use them to inform the evolution of the KEF, to ensure it provides the most helpful structure to describe, share and critique our collective work.

How the NCCPE can help

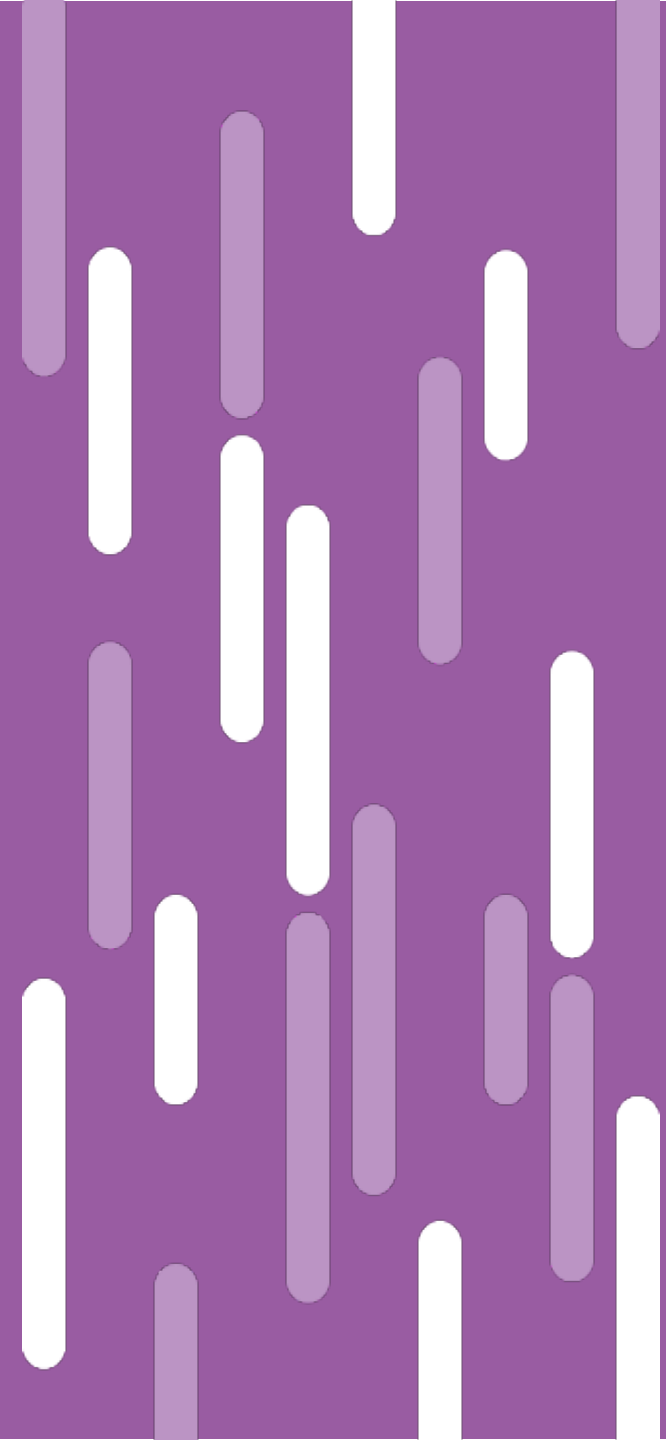
The NCCPE provides support to HEIs to develop their public and community engagement activity. We offer consultancy and advice; professional development; conferences and events; and we support a network of professional staff working in public engagement.

We also provide our Engage Watermark, an award granted to higher education institutions to recognise their strategic support for public engagement and their commitment to improve the support offered.

You can find out more about our services here: www.publicengagement.ac.uk

Please contact us if you would like to discuss the report or involve us in your ongoing work in this area: nccpe.enquiries@uwe.ac.uk

Appendices





Introduction to the KEF

Introduction to the Knowledge Exchange Framework

The Knowledge Exchange Framework is managed by Research England.

'The aim of the KEF is to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public funding for knowledge exchange (KE) and to further a culture of continuous improvement in universities.'

It will allow universities to better understand and improve their own performance, as well as provide businesses and other users with more information to help them access the world-class knowledge and expertise embedded in English HEPS¹.'

The KEF was initiated by the Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation in 2017, in an effort to garner more information as to how Higher Education Providers (HEPs) were serving the economy and society for the benefit of publics, businesses and communities. The KEF was piloted with a sample of providers during Spring 2019. The first full process was finalised in 2020, with participating institutions requested to submit narrative statements by October 2020 and publication in March 2021. A detailed timeline for the development of the KEF and links to associated development documentation is available on the Research England website².

The KEF has seven perspectives that cover seven areas of knowledge exchange, namely:

1. Research Partnerships
2. Working with business
3. Working with the public and third sector
4. Skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship
5. Local growth and regeneration
6. IP and Commercialisation
7. Public and community engagement

The majority of data is drawn from existing mechanisms for gathering data from universities about their knowledge exchange activities e.g. the Higher Education Business and Community Interactions (HE-BCI) survey, which is an annual survey for institutions run by HESA. However, due to a lack of reliable and relevant data that could be used to inform the Public and Community Engagement perspective, institutions are invited to complete a self-assessment against five criteria. In addition, both the Local Growth and Regeneration perspective, and the Public and Community Engagement perspective invited institutions to complete a narrative, to provide the context for their work and, in the case of Public and Community Engagement, evidence to support the self-assessment scores.

1. <https://re.ukri.org/knowledge-exchange/knowledge-exchange-framework/>

2. <https://kef.ac.uk/about>



Introduction to the KEF

KEF clusters

The KEF clusters enable institutions to compare themselves with others who share similar characteristics in terms of capability and resources to undertake knowledge exchange. The clusters provide a means to make comparisons across similar institutions. Research England have provided a diagram to illustrate the clusters.

Table 19: Cluster definitions

Cluster	
Cluster E	Large universities – broad based
Cluster J	Mid-sized – teaching focus
Cluster M	Smaller – teaching focus
Cluster V	Very large, very high research intensity
Cluster X	Large, high research intensity
STEM cluster	Specialists STEM
Arts cluster	Specialists covering art, drama, and music

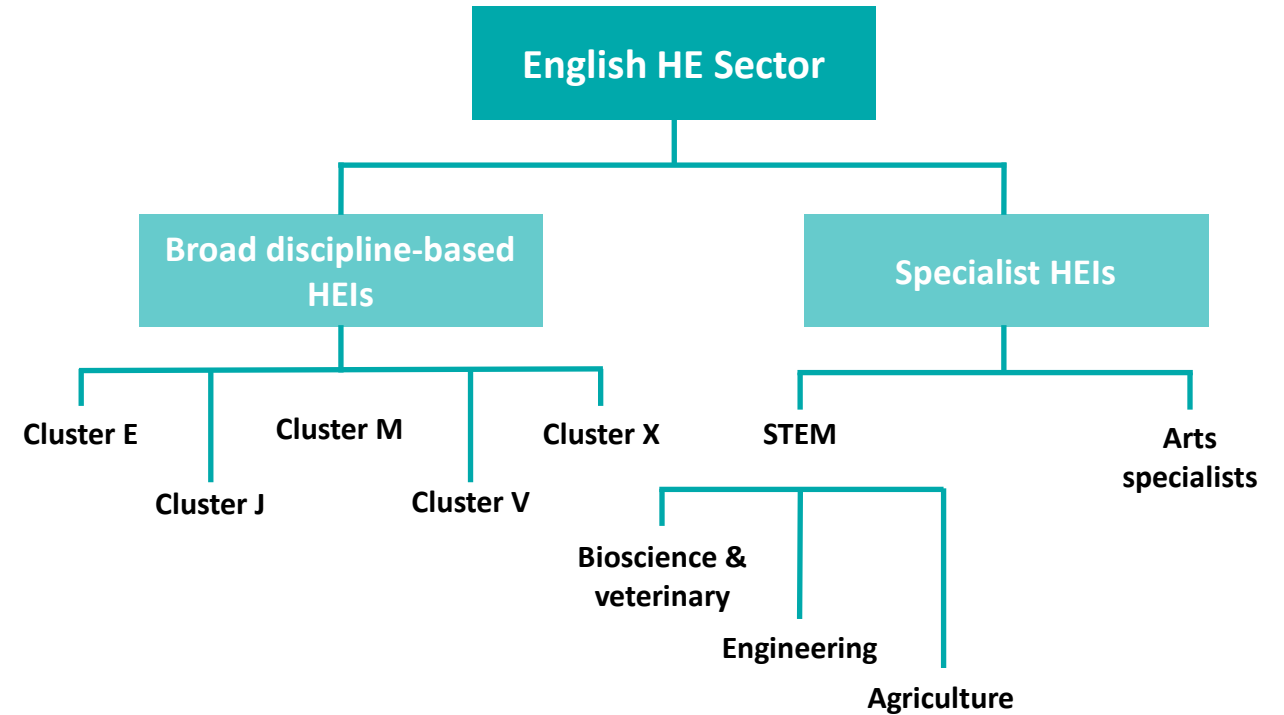


Figure 29: Detail of clusters

<https://kef.ac.uk/about>



Introduction to the KEF

The Public and Community Engagement narrative

The Public and Community Engagement narrative has 5 aspects, with a word limit of 2000 words:

1. Strategy
2. Support
3. Activity
4. Results and learning
5. Acting on results

Table 20: Self assessment definitions

Self assessment definitions	
1	Planning phase, nothing yet in place
2	Embryonic, in the early stages of development
3	Developing and implementation taking place
4	Fully developed and implemented in most but not all areas with outcomes and impacts becoming apparent
5	Fully developed and embedded across the institution to an exemplary level, with a culture of continuous improvement and good evidence on outcomes and impacts.

A [detailed overview of the P&CE approach](#) in the KEF can be read on the NCCPE's website.

The Public and Community Engagement narrative template

Aspect 1: Strategy
Developing your strategy
 Information on your existing strategy process and allocation of resources; how you identified relevant public community groups and their needs; how you facilitated their ability to engage with the institution, as a means to help them achieve their intended achievements.
Refer to the supporting guidance document for examples of evidence you may wish to include to corroborate your self-assessment (page 12).

Aspect 2: Support
Practical support to deliver your strategy
 Provide information about the support structures and recognition you have put in place to support your community engagement, and how you have facilitated their ability to engage with the institution, as a means to help them achieve their intended achievements.
Refer to the supporting guidance document for examples of evidence you may wish to include to corroborate your self-assessment (page 13).

Aspect 3: Activity
Delivering your strategy: activities
 Provide information on the focus of your activities and how they have met the identified needs of your community groups. Please focus on the last three years.
Refer to the supporting guidance document for examples of evidence you may wish to include to corroborate your self-assessment (page 14).

Aspect 4: Results and learning
Evidencing success
 Describe the outcomes and/or impacts of your activities and how you have evaluated these individual activities to ensure they have addressed your strategic objectives – and intended achievements for public and communities? To what extent have you learnt from these activities and applied this to future activity?
Refer to the supporting guidance document for examples of evidence you may wish to include to corroborate your self-assessment (page 15).

Aspect 5: Acting on results
Communicating and acting on the results
 How has the institution acted on the outcomes of your activities or programmes to ensure it is meeting the wider strategic aims; to inform the development of your strategy; and to continuously improve outcomes and impacts for public and communities? To what extent have the results of the work been shared with the communities involved, internally in the institution, and externally?
Refer to the supporting guidance document for examples of evidence you may wish to include to corroborate your self-assessment (page 16).

Word count: []

Self-assessment score: 0 ←

scoring criteria (page 12-14): Insert score between 1 – 5 here. Refer to guidance document for scoring criteria (page 12-14).

Figure 30: Extract from the KEF P&CE narrative template

Introduction to the KEF

Evidence informed

The approach to the narrative statements for the P&CE dimension of the KEF was based on evidence of how to support effective public and community engagement in higher education, and was developed in response to feedback from an initial pilot conducted in 2019. The approach was informed by the NCCPE’s work (over more than ten years) to support the development of P&CE capability in the HE sector. In particular, it drew on the [NCCPE’s EDGE tool](#), a self-assessment framework for institutions who want to enhance their approach to public and community engagement.

Reviewing the sector’s response to the KEF

The KEF responses were analysed by the NCCPE in 2021, to explore if and how the self-assessment process worked, and to reflect on how the sector responded to the process. The findings included the following:

- The narrative template captured useful evidence, and largely made sense to the sector, although there was some confusion in the distinction between the last two sections (Results and Learning and Acting on Results).
- The submitted self-assessment scores covered a wide range, suggesting that HEIs approached the exercise in the spirit that it was designed, to provide robust reflection on their practice.
- Some improvements could be made: for instance, by introducing a light touch moderation process; modifying the scoring criteria to encourage more differentiation at the top and bottom; combining narrative with some data entry.

The NCCPE’s review of the ‘mechanics’ of the KEF made clear the potential of a broader thematic review of the narratives. This report summarises the findings of this review, which has investigated key trends underpinning current P&CE practice and similarities and differences in approach across the different clusters of HEIs. A fuller summary of the NCCPE’s analysis, and of the wider reception of the KEF can be found in Research England’s report [‘Review of the first iteration of the Knowledge Exchange Framework’](#) published in January 2022.

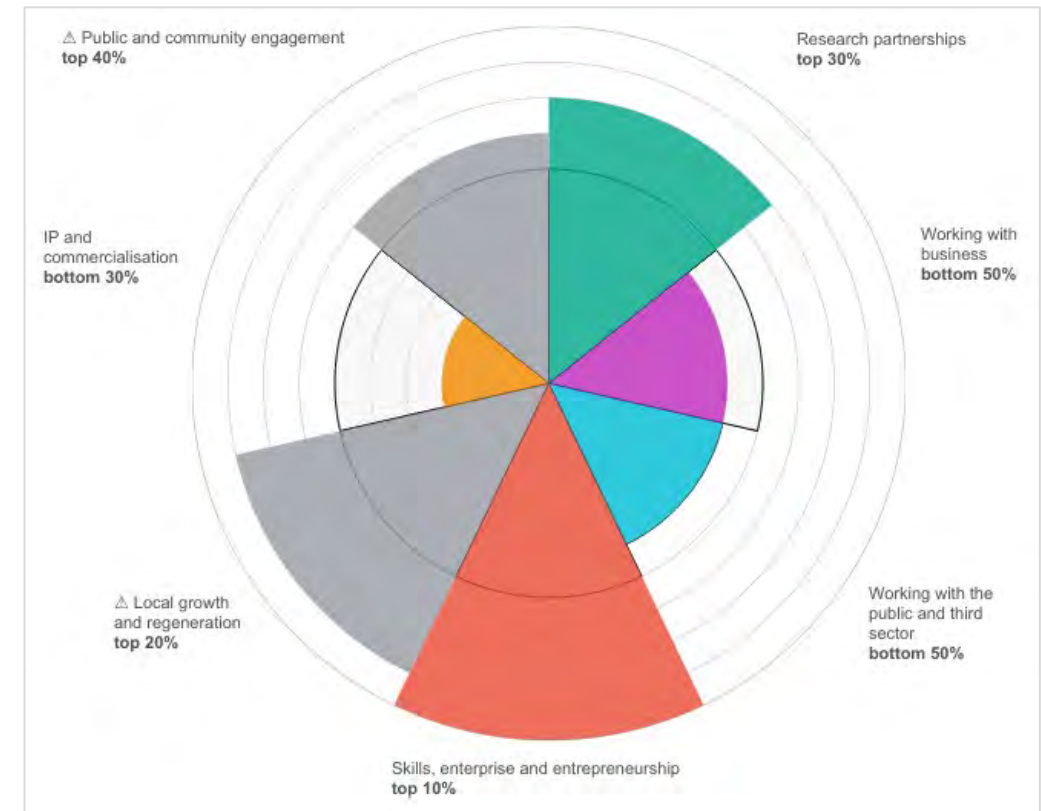


Figure 31: Example of a KEF ‘dashboard’, reporting the results



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We work to change perspectives, promote innovation, and nurture and celebrate excellence. We also champion meaningful engagement that makes a real and valued difference to people's lives.

The NCCPE is supported by the UK Higher Education Councils, Research Councils UK and Wellcome, and has been hosted by the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England since it was established in 2008.

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