



# NCCPE Unconference 2021

A Shared Vision for Public Engagement

Monday 8 November

## Summary

This session was led by the UKRI public engagement team with support from the NCCPE and was inspired by UKRI's vision for:

*“an outstanding research and innovation system in the UK that gives everyone the opportunity to contribute and to benefit, enriching lives locally, nationally and internationally.”*

The session aim was to **create a shared vision for the future of public engagement and identify the actions needed to achieve it.**

To do this, we asked attendees to imagine that UKRI's vision had been realised and that the challenges to achieving it had been overcome. We then asked attendees to come up with a set of actions to achieve the vision for four key stakeholders in the system: funders, higher education institutions (HEIs), researchers and public engagement professionals (PEPs).

UKRI is developing a new public engagement strategy to be published in spring 2022 and ideas generated in this session will feed into its development.

## Session outcomes

### *Individual visions*

In the first part of the session, attendees were asked to imagine what the characteristics of the research and innovation system might be, were the vision to be achieved.

Their ideas and visions for this future can be summarised as follows:

1. Research and Innovation (R&I) is meeting the needs of all society by public engagement (PE) being embedded into research priority setting, research design, and co-produced research (as a result the public value research and innovation)
2. PE is a core aspect of all research and research funding and is recognised within “excellence” criteria, including as part of essential ethical considerations
3. PE is fully resourced (in time and money) for all involved to properly embed engagement and relationship building with the most appropriate communities into all stages of research
4. PE and civic responsibility are core to universities' missions, brought about through incentives and penalties from funders (including a greater shift toward valuing societal Impact)
5. There are sustained and productive relationships between universities and communities due to long-term and flexible funding and investment

6. There is ample, core infrastructure for equitable and ethical PE including skills development opportunities for researchers and sufficient, stable and skilled PEP and broker roles
7. There is reduced hierarchy and competitiveness in the R&I system and it values diverse expertise (not only number and ranking of academic publications) including engagement skills and the expertise from outside of professional research
8. R&I is inclusive and diverse, valuing different backgrounds and job pathways, universities are (physical and digital) spaces for all society, and engagement is accessible to all
9. Evaluation and continuous improvement of PE is properly embedded into the practice of researchers, institutions, and funders, including sharing of what does not work

The group's ideas can be seen in full, and added to, here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/PEvisions>

### *Actions for the sector*

In part two, attendees worked in groups and individually to discuss actions for four specific stakeholder groups that would enable this shared vision to be achieved. These built on existing discussions across the sector about what is needed to strengthen the culture of public engagement.

You can see, and add to, the actions at the links below.

- Funders: <https://tinyurl.com/funderactions>
- HEIs: <https://tinyurl.com/HEIactions>
- Researchers: <https://tinyurl.com/researcheractions>
- PEPs: <https://tinyurl.com/PEPactions>

### *Prioritisation*

In the final part of the session attendees were asked to vote on which actions should be a priority for each stakeholder group. The results of this exercise are shown below.

### **Priority actions for the sector**

Funders should:

- 1. Include PEPs in peer-review process for research**
- 2. Provide longer-term funding and encourage HEIs with their own funding to break short term cycles**
- 3. Recognise and support engagement as an essential, not additional, part of the whole research system**

HEIs should:

- 1. Commit to embedding engagement across the organisation**
- 2. Ensure leaders understand the value of public engagement and act as champions for it**
- 3. Resource engagement effectively, not relying solely on external project funding**



Researchers should:

- 1. Understand the wider value of research to the community, not just the individual**
- 2. Make time to think through a long-term approach to public engagement, rather than on a project-by-project basis**
- 3. Engage with and value the help on offer from PEPs**

PEPs should:

- 1. Build inclusivity into their work, always considering who is and isn't included and why**
- 2. Create more opportunities for matchmaking between PEPs, researchers, community brokers and public groups.**
- 3. Build the capacity of researchers to free up PEP time for advising, consulting and thinking strategically.**

### **Next steps**

We will be discussing this set of actions and asking for further feedback at the NCCPE ENGAGE conference on Thursday 2 December at 9.15am -10.15am. You can also continue to add to the Padlets we used within the session (see below). UKRI is developing a new public engagement strategy to be published in spring 2022 and ideas generated from both these sessions will feed into its development.

Please continue to add to the Padlets!

- The future vision: <https://tinyurl.com/PEvisions>
- Actions for Funders: <https://tinyurl.com/funderactions>
- Actions for HEIs: <https://tinyurl.com/HEIactions>
- Actions for Researchers: <https://tinyurl.com/researcheractions>
- Actions for PEPs: <https://tinyurl.com/PEPactions>