The highlights in numbers

- £79K HEIF match funding for CSF; £1 Million+ secured for PER as part of research grants
- 31 PER Seed Fund applications: 10 grants awarded
- 51 VC PER Award Entries: 14 Award Winners, 9 Highly-Cemmended & 1 VC’s winner.
- 2 best-practice PER films produced: 14,240 views
- 3 key stakeholder events: 340+ attendees
- 200+ researchers & support staff took part in 15+ PER training sessions.
- 10+ panels & committees; 20+ interviews; 15+ focus groups & workshops; 10+ presentations.
- Strategic PER communications & publications: potential reach of 20,000+.
- 124 researchers published 150 articles on The Conversation with a readership of 4 Million+.
- Curiosity Carnival – Oxford’s European Researchers’ Night. 500+ researchers participated; 9,400 attended; 262,000 engaged online; potential communications reach of 45 Million.
- 89% of Curiosity Carnival public attendees reported an excellent to good experience (56% rated as excellent); 83% learnt about research.
- Staff survey: 90% report an increase re: importance & profile given to PER since the start of CSF.
1.0 Executive Summary

Following two years of Catalyst Seed Funding, Oxford now has the infrastructure in place to foster an environment in which Public Engagement with Research (PER) can flourish for the future. The second year of funding (CSF 2016-17) provided the support and resources to work towards embedding the activities that were piloted in first year (CSF 2015-16) and develop new activities that will now become part of Oxford’s core programme.

Our approach for CSF 2016-17, we:

• Took a strategic approach and were bold re: what high-quality PER at Oxford ‘looks like’
• Fostered a network of PER champions and ambassadors
• Provided researchers with PER opportunities and PER funding
• Provided support, guidance and training for researchers to seek their own funding through research grants and to better understand PER as a route to research impact
• Facilitated opportunities for PER partnerships between the University’s Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM) and researchers
• Raised the profile of, and rewarded and recognised PER
• Demonstrated the University’s commitment to this agenda
• Worked in partnership with many colleagues across the University on PER projects

Key highlights – CSF 2016-17 enabled Oxford to:

• Be strategic: published and launched Oxford’s first PER Strategic Plan.

• Make a difference to PER culture: staff reported an increase in both the importance and profile given to PER (~90%); practical support (82%); their understanding of what PER is (73%); in senior leadership support (74%) and reward and recognition (68%).

• Leverage additional funding: Assisted in securing > £1 Million for PER activities as part of research grants, including 3 new PER coordinators for 4+ years; funded 10 PER Seed Fund projects; developed ‘PER into Pathways to Impact’ guidance; secured £79k in Higher Education & Innovation Funding (HEIF) to match the CSF 2016-17.

• Stage Oxford’s biggest PER event: this large-scale ambitious project enabled 500+ academics, researchers and DPhil students to take part in Curiosity Carnival – part of European Researchers’ Night. This University-wide project was one of a kind for Oxford, which is a very devolved institution.

• Significantly raise the profile of PER internally and externally: the communications campaign reached thousands of staff at Oxford; and tens of thousands externally through filmed case studies; social media; online communications; printed publications; external media coverage and events including the VC’s PER Awards.

• Create a legacy and a sustainable way forward – the strategic activities that have been developed, piloted and evaluated through CSF support are now funded by other sources to continue to foster a climate at Oxford in which high-quality PER can flourish.
2.0 Background and Context

2.1 University of Oxford – an introduction

The University of Oxford’s vision is to lead the world in research and education; and seeks to do this in ways which benefit society on a national and a global scale. It is a large and complex institution with a distinctive structure consisting of a ‘central’ University and 38 colleges. The 38 colleges are self-governing and financially independent institutions, which are related to the Central University in a federal system. While the ‘central’ University consists of the four Academic Divisions*; Gardens, Libraries And Museums**; Continuing Education Department; and University Administration and Services (UAS) which includes Research Services and the Public Affairs Department (PAD).

* The four Academic Divisions are as follows:

Humanities Division (HUMS): 9 Faculties and the Ruskin School of Art
Mathematics and Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS): 12 departments
Medical Sciences Division (MSD): 16 Departments
Social Sciences Division (SSD): 12 Departments

** The Gardens, Libraries And Museums (GLAM) consists of the: Ashmolean Museum; Bodleian Libraries; Botanic Garden and Harcourt Arboretum; Museum of History of Science; Museum of Natural History and Pitt Rivers Museum.

The collegiate system is at the heart of Oxford’s culture. Students and academics are part of a small, interdisciplinary community via their College, and a large world-class teaching and research institution via the Central University. The Central University is also very devolved; the majority of staff are employed at the departmental level; with a smaller percentage of staff employed at the Divisional and University-level.

The devolved nature is an important factor to note and has had a significant influence on how we have aimed to change the culture for PER at Oxford. ‘Top-Down’ ways of working tend not to work well at Oxford; stakeholder engagement across the various constituent parts of the University together with extensive consultation and joint working has been key.
2.2 University of Oxford - Facts, Figures & Rankings

• The University of Oxford's funding is as follows: the largest source is £577.4M (40% of total income) from external research funding - research councils, charities, trusts, foundations, and industry. 15% comes from government grants such as Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Other income includes annual transfers from Oxford University Press, income from the commercialisation of research, and philanthropic support (22%); student academic fees, (22%) and investment income (1%).


• There are over 23,000 students at Oxford, including 11,728 undergraduates and 10,941 postgraduates. Of places offered to British students, 59% of undergraduate places are students from state schools.

• According to the 2014 Research Excellence Framework, the official UK-wide assessment of all university research, Oxford has the largest volume of world-leading research in the country.

• The ‘Central’ University of Oxford (i.e not including those employed solely by the Colleges) employs over 13,000 people.

This includes (from collated 2016 figures):

Academic staff: 1,817
Research staff: 4,972
Teaching & research support: 471
Professional, Administrative & Clerical Academic-related 3,111
Museums & Libraries: 697

• 20,000 enrolments on courses at the Department for Continuing Education, make Oxford University one of the largest providers of continuing education in the UK.

• Oxford has an active programme of graduate student training through the Doctoral Training Centre (www.dtc.ox.ac.uk) and 17 Centres for Doctoral Training (www.cdt.ox.ac.uk).
2.3 A snapshot of Public Engagement at Oxford prior to the CSF Project (pre-June 2015)

Public Engagement with Research was supported at Oxford at the Divisional level and within GLAM, but there was little dedicated support at the institutional or University-wide level. Departmental support for PER at Oxford was and remains variable – some departments have full-time or part-time PER professional services staff; for the other departments, PER is only a very small part of a staff member’s role (e.g. Departmental Communication Officers or Research Manager).

Examples of Public Engagement with Research platforms and support offered at the Divisional Level, before June 2015 include:

- GLAM provided a platform for researchers to engage the public through the live programming including: the Ashmolean's LiveFridays (after-hours Friday night openings including performances, creative workshops and talks) and the Museum of Natural History’s Science Saturdays (afternoons of interactive table-top exhibits). For example: ‘LiveFridays: Social Animals’ was a collaboration between the Social Sciences Division and the Ashmolean museum in May 2015 to stage an evening of public engagement that involved over 70 social scientists and attracted over 4500 people.

- Oxford Sparks (MPLS Division): Established in 2011, Oxford Sparks provides an online portal for engagement with Oxford’s scientific research through high-quality animations and podcasts and provides public engagement training for DPhil students, researchers and academics. The activities are developed and delivered by the MPLS Public Engagement Facilitator.

- TORCH (Humanities Division): The Oxford Research Centre for The Humanities was launched in 2013 and provides an interdisciplinary platform for Humanities scholars to collaborate with others, develop partnerships with private and public organisations and engage with wider non-academic audiences. An annual Public Engagement summer school takes place for Humanities DPhil students.

Examples of dedicated PER Support at the Departmental Level include:

- Nuffield Department of Medicine (NDM) which is a ‘super-department’ at Oxford consisting of a number of sub-departments: The Scientific Outreach Manager (NDM Strategic) coordinated and facilitated PE activity across NDM; activities included: Head of Department PE awards; the expectation to complete two PE activities a year is included in job descriptions; co-ordination of key events including: Oxford Open Doors, Cheltenham Science Festival and Oxfordshire Science Festival.

- Department of Physics: The Department has an outreach manager who coordinates and creates opportunities for researchers to engage with public audiences, including Stargazing Oxford; and Flash Talk Physics an online platform for researchers to give
short talks about their research. The department is also home to Zooniverse.org, the largest and most successful platform for citizen science projects online. The Zooniverse began with a single project, Galaxy Zoo which was launched in July 2007, led by Professor Chris Lintott, Professor of Astrophysics/ Citizen Science Lead. It now has projects spanning Astrophysics, Biology, Climatology and the Humanities.

Public engagement activities that were already taking place:

A mapping and review exercise in the first year of the CSF (15/16) revealed that there were a number of Public Engagement with Research activities and projects already being delivered by academics, researchers and DPhil students in departments and faculties across the University but that knowledge of these projects was often at the local level (i.e. known only to the department or the Division) and there was little or no networking or shared-learning between the activities and projects across the departments and Divisions.

2.4 Catalyst Seed Fund 2015-16

The CSF came at a very opportune time for Oxford – public engagement was already one of the priorities of the University Strategic Plan (2013-2018) and the University Innovation Strategy (approved in early 2015); and as such, steps had been taken to enhance institutional support for this activity through the appointments of the:

• University’s first Academic Champion for Public Engagement with Research – Professor Shearer West, Head of Humanities (May 2015).

• University’s first Senior Facilitator & Coordinator, Public Engagement with Research – Dr Lesley Paterson, based in Research Services (June 2015).

“The public will be involved in the University’s research activities through workshops and presentations on key issues in society and as co-researchers and contributors to research projects.”

Strategic Plan, University of Oxford, 2013-2018

The overall aim of Oxford’s CSF project was to enable us to take much more effective action and make significant progress towards fostering a climate in which high-quality Public Engagement with Research (PER) could flourish than would have been possible with the two new appointments alone.
2.4.1 CSF 2015-16 Objectives

1. To become more strategic and coordinated in the University's approach to Public Engagement with Research (PER)

2. To create University-wide opportunities for shared learning of PER best practice

3. To increase researchers’ awareness of PER and of the support available for such activities

4. To better understand how to resource PER in a sustainable way

2.4.2 Key outcomes - CSF 2015-16 enabled Oxford to:

- Take a strategic approach: Following a 10-month consultation and stakeholder engagement process, the University’s first Public Engagement with Research Strategic Plan was signed off by the University’s Research Committee in July 2016.

- Raise the profile and reward and recognise high-quality Public Engagement with Research (PER): The inaugural Vice-Chancellor’s Awards for PER took place – 84 entries received and 12 winners announced at the Awards ceremony; developed the online PER Portal that is now available on the University’s main website featuring best practice case studies and other resources; gave talks and presentations to many groups across the University; organised PER events and seminars; commissioned a best practice case study film (Good Germs; Bad Germs); increased the profile of PER at Oxford, externally and internally, through the University’s many channels.

- Understand PER at Oxford: Conducted mapping and analysis of PER activities and support across the University, including 7 EDGE analyses: 1 x Institutional level; 4 x Academic Divisions; GLAM; Continuing Education Department; analysed the Oxford-only results from the Factors Affecting PE by Researchers survey; mapped the existing provision for PER training across the University.

- Secure additional funding and support the resourcing of PER projects: Awarded a significant grant from the European Commission to develop and deliver a high-quality, large-scale PER campaign and event, Oxford’s European Researchers’ Night Curiosity Carnival; funded 10 PER Seed Fund projects; developed a PER costing tool; developed and delivered a seminar re: Public Engagement with Research – What the Funders Want (110+ attended); secured CSF-matched funding through Higher Education Innovation Funding (HEIF) for PER for 2016-17.

- Become more coordinated in our approach: Established the PER Advisory Group with PER leads from across the University, Chaired by the CSF Project Manager (CSF PM) with representatives from the 4 Academic Divisions; GLAM; PAD; Continuing Education; Research Services.
3.0 CSF 2016 -17: Project Objectives, Plans & Resources

Following the first year of CSF (2015-16 academic year), RCUK released a call for a second round of funding for the 10 CSF HEIs for 2016-17. Our aim was to build on the progress achieved during the initial CSF funding period to continue to foster a culture where excellent Public Engagement with Research is better embedded at Oxford and effectively supported within its policies, procedures and practices. Six 'work packages' were planned for this second year of CSF.

Three new Work Packages: 1) fostering GLAM-PER collaborations; 2) developing training and support for building public engagement into research applications; 3) developing training and resources for better supporting public engagement as a route to research impact. These Work Packages come under Objectives 1 and 2 (see below).

Two work packages were a continuation of CSF 2015-16: 4) raise the profile of PER and demonstrate the University’s commitment to this agenda; 5) recognition and reward (Objectives 3 and 4). Furthermore, we planned a sixth Work Package to: 6) dedicate even more resource to understanding the outputs, outcomes and impacts of our CSF work (Objective 5), building on the evaluation and reflection that took place in 2015-16.

3.1 CSF 2016-17 Objectives

1. Build capacity for researchers and professional services staff to develop and resource high-quality Public Engagement with Research activities.

2. Develop training and support to equip staff with the skills, tools and knowledge to better understand and gather evidence for public engagement as a route to research impact.

3. Promote Public Engagement with Research and demonstrate the University’s commitment to it.

4. Recognise and reward high-quality Public Engagement with Research activity.

5. Evaluate the outcomes and impact of the Catalyst Seed Fund project.
3.2 Our planned approach to achieve the Objectives

i) Develop a coherent plan for PER training at Oxford that reduces duplication; increases efficiency and reaches a broader range of research students and researchers.

ii) Collate existing resources and develop new resources and training re: planning and building high-quality PER activities into new research grants.

iii) Conduct a scoping exercise to better understand how to facilitate more PER partnerships between GLAM and researchers.

iv) Conduct a review on Oxford’s REF 2014 impact case studies; collate existing resources and develop new resources and training for staff to better understand public engagement as a route to research impact and how to gather evidence.

v) Provide seed funding for researchers to develop, deliver and evaluate high-quality PER activities to catalyse change.

vi) Develop and deliver Curiosity Carnival - Oxford’s European Researchers’ Night – providing opportunities for hundreds of researchers to take part in public engagement activities and training; build GLAM-PER relationships and raise PER profile.

vii) Create and support the PER Academic Advisory Network.

viii) Increase awareness of the PER Strategic Plan and encourage buy-in from academic, research and support staff.

ix) Deliver the second Vice-Chancellor’s PER Awards; explore the potential to include PER within promotions criteria.

x) Conduct an internal and external evaluation against the CSF objectives.

3.3 Resources for development and delivery of the activities

Professor Ian Walmsley: Pro-VC, Research & Innovation; Chair of the University Research Committee.
CSF Role: Principle Investigator

Professor Sarah Whatmore (until January 2017) and Professor Alison Woollard (from February 2017), Academic Champion for Public Engagement with Research,
CSF role: Academic leadership
Dr Glenn Swafford, Director of Research Services.
CSF role: In-line manager to CSF project manager and supports CSF PI

Dr Lesley Paterson, Senior Facilitator and Coordinator, Public Engagement with Research; promoted to Head of Public Engagement with Research, Research Services in August 2017; Chair of the PER Advisory Group; PI and Senior Project Manager for *Curiosity Carnival*.
CSF role: Project Manager

Part-time and fixed-term staff to support the central PER programme including that funded by CSF, HEIF and European Researchers’ Night: F/T (full-time) fixed-term (5 months) PER Facilitator; P/T (0.3 FTE) fixed-term (9 months) PER Administrator, Research Services; F/T fixed-term (4 months) PER Administrator/ Coordinator, Research Services; 1 ‘micro-intern’ (1 week)
CSF role: administration and support

PER Advisory Group (PER AG):
Professional Services Staff group with representatives from across the University.
CSF role: guidance, support and reflection

External and internal consultancy: Utilised the services of 2 x PER freelancers; 2 x evaluation consultants; 1 x internal events consultant and internal design and filming services.
CSF role: to support the development and delivery of activities

University Research Committee: Provides oversight and is ultimately responsible for the PER Strategic Plan and its implementation, of which the CSF project is a critical part.
CSF role: oversight; senior input and guidance

3.4 Matched funding for CSF 2016–17

The following additional financial support was secured as match funding for the CSF 2016–17 grant (ca. £60K): £79K from the University’s Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) allocation and £5k from the University’s Institutional Strategic Support Fund (ISSF) from Wellcome. A significant grant was also secured from the European Commission for the development, delivery and evaluation of *Curiosity Carnival*. 
4.0 Our approach to culture change & rationale

4.1 Developing support, guidance and training to build public engagement skills and knowledge

The PER training mapping exercise that took place during CSF 2015-16 revealed several gaps in the University’s training provision (see below):

Extract from the PER Training Mapping Report undertaken in 2015-16:

- There is PER-relevant training currently available to Oxford University research staff although much of it is restricted to staff from particular divisions and departments and focuses primarily on the informing/inspiring purposes of PER.

- There is scope to widen the accessibility and availability of the “Introduction to PER” courses (which are currently available to research staff and students within the Science Divisions) to staff across the University. There is little training for the consultation/collaboration types of PER or training for integrating PER into grants or PER as a route to research impact.

- There is considerable scope for increasing the visibility/access of the existing training provision

In light of these findings, we undertook the following activities and projects in the 2016-17 academic year, as follows:
4.1.1 Coordination and Coherence

**Training:** There was no ‘one-stop-shop’ for those wishing to increase their public engagement knowledge and skills as the information about the PER training offer at Oxford was spread over many Divisional and Departmental websites. To increase the visibility, coherence and accessibility of the current PER training available we created an online training portal as part of the PER webpages that were launched in 2015–16. The online portal (see below) was published in October 2016 and signposts staff and research students to the key PER training on offer internally and externally. See: [www.ox.ac.uk/research/public-engagement/support-researchers](http://www.ox.ac.uk/research/public-engagement/support-researchers) (see the ‘Training’ tab):

![Support for engaged researchers](https://example.com/support.png)

Working with the Divisional PER leads, we also aimed to develop a more coherent and coordinated plan for foundation PER training at Oxford that was accessible to all staff and research students. As such the training series – *An Introduction to Public Engagement with Research*, that had previously been run for a number of years by MPLS/ MSD primarily for their staff and research students, was offered for the first time to all staff and research students across all four Academic Divisions in 2016–17. MPLS also organised a training session that focused on debate and dialogue to provide more support and guidance for this type of PER to help address this gap in provision as shown by the PER training mapping exercise.

**Festivals:** We also produced a draft resource that summarised the key festivals that took place across the UK and in and around Oxford (highlighting dates; typical audiences; participation costs etc) to encourage wider awareness of the diversity of festivals and to encourage researchers to be more strategic in which festivals they would aim to participate in.
4.1.2 Public Engagement as a route to research impact; building public engagement into research grants.

The most significant piece of ‘new’ work with regard to PER support and training was the development of resources and workshops for researchers, DPhil students and support staff to:

- Plan and resource high-quality public engagement activities as part of research grants (i.e. via Research Councils’ Pathways to Impact and Wellcome Trust Provision for Public Engagement).

- Better understand public engagement as a route to research impact; what research impact via public engagement ‘looks like’; and an introduction on how to gather evidence for research impact.

The development process was as follows:

- Undertook desk research to explore the existing resources that were already publically available for shared learning and to prevent ‘reinventing the wheel’.

- Conducted interviews with academic staff to better understand their needs and wants with regard to support for building PE into research grants and PE as a route to research impact.

- Created new resources (e.g. see left) and training courses that were piloted on a) researchers and academics b) research facilitators and public engagement facilitators and c) GLAM staff.

- Members of the PER Advisory Group were also involved in the development and delivery process, to ensure that the resources and training was appropriate for researchers and other staff across all four academic Divisions and for GLAM.

Additional non-training related activities were also undertaken to increase understanding and awareness of public engagement as a valid and valuable route to research impact, including for the REF. The PER team undertook a review of Oxford’s Impact case studies from REF 2014, using the same search terms as used in the NCCPE PE-REF report, to explore the number of REF impact case studies that included PE, in which panels, what types of PE impact arose and to identify 4* REF Impact Case Studies for reflection and to be used as exemplars in future training workshops and training. This also provided the PER
team with further insight into the PER activities taking place across Oxford and will provide a baseline to compare the PER-Impact case studies that are submitted for REF 20/21.

The CSF Project Manager (PM) and other Oxford PER staff attended the NCCPE’s PER-REF session at Engage 2016 and the Lessons from the REF workshop in July 2017 to share learning and views. Inspired by the workshop, the CSF PM and the wider PER Advisory Group produced a ‘PER & the REF’ discussion paper for Oxford’s REF Project Board to ensure that PER was considered as part of their early discussions. We also shared this discussion paper with the NCCPE and fellow NCCPE Lessons from the REF workshop attendees, to share our thinking and to support the NCCPE in facilitating an ongoing conversation and debate re: public engagement and the REF. At the request of Oxford’s REF Project Board, the PER Advisory Group was asked to draft the response to Q23 (which focused specifically on public engagement) which was included in the University’s official response to HEFCE.

4.1.2 The Conversation

Following a trial year in 2015–16, Oxford renewed its membership of The Conversation in 2016/17 to: a) continue to provide an online platform that enables research students and researchers a relatively resource-light and well-supported way to engage the public with their research through written articles and b) enable researchers and research students to benefit from a second year of training and workshops to be provided by the Editors of The Conversation as part of the membership package. This includes training on: An Introduction to The Conversation; Writing for public audiences; Writing opinion articles.
4.2 Funding for Public Engagement with Research

4.2.1 PER Seed Fund

A call for proposals was made for the second University PER Seed Fund in Michaelmas Term (term 1) 2016-17, following the pilot scheme that was run in 2015-16 and funded by CSF. This small grants scheme is available for academics, researchers and DPhil students to develop, deliver and evaluate PER activities.

The entries were reviewed by Divisional and Departmental Public Engagement or Research Facilitators and the funding recommendations were made by a panel of academics and researchers from different disciplines and then ratified by the Academic Champion for PER.

As a condition of the funding, every Awardee was also required to attend an evaluation workshop at the beginning of their project. The CSF PM also offered telephone or face-to-face feedback to every unsuccessful applicant.

Fig. 4. The PER Seed Fund provided a small grant to evaluate the drama ‘Fishy Clouds’ that aims to raise awareness about antimicrobial resistance and research with children in Thailand.

More details on the PER Seed Fund are provided in Case Study 2.

4.2.2 Public engagement as part of research grants

The CSF Project Manager, together with the Divisional PER Facilitators from MSD and MPLS, provided support to the seven P.I.’s and their Co-I.’s that were applying to major multi-£Million calls for funding from the Wellcome Trust – the Wellcome Centres and the ‘Our Planet Our Health’ grant programme. Both funding streams stipulated that the bid must include a commitment to PER with a significant programme of activity that was embedded as part of the research plans.
Each PI was provided with one-to-one guidance and support. The PER team is continuing to provide support and guidance for those that were successful in their funding bids.

4.3 Fostering PER collaborations between GLAM, departments and researchers

4.3.1 GLAM-PER scoping project

As noted in Oxford’s PER Strategic Plan:

_The University has some of the best researchers and collections – museums, gardens, libraries (with over 3 million visitors per year) – in the world. This creates the potential for an exceptional environment in which to conduct high-quality Public Engagement with Research. [Section 4.2]_

And that we will capitalise on this by:

_Facilitating opportunities for PER collaboration, in particular between researchers and the University’s museums, gardens, libraries and collections. [Section 5.3]_

As such, we developed and delivered a scoping study in 2016-17 to better understand how we can foster and build more PER partnership projects between GLAM (the University’s Gardens, Libraries And Museums) and Oxford’s researchers. The aim was to explore:

- The PER activities already taking place in GLAM and the PER opportunities/platforms that were available; to better understand the PER ‘offer’ from GLAM to researchers and departments and how PER fits in with GLAM strategies and vision;

- The current capacity for GLAM to take on more PER activities and the potential for expansion;

- How to foster and facilitate successful collaborations between GLAM and researchers for PER.
The process incorporated desk research; group workshops and one-to-one meetings with GLAM staff. Further information is provided in Case Study 3.

4.3.2 Oxford's European Researchers' Night: Curiosity Carnival

In June 2016, Oxford was awarded a significant grant by the European Commission to develop, deliver and evaluate Oxford’s largest ever PER event as part of European Researchers’ Night 2017.

Although the majority of this project was funded by a grant from the European Commission, Curiosity Carnival simply would not have happened without the CSF. The CSF provided the funding for additional PER staff resource in 2015-16 and 2016-17 that enabled the CSF PM to have the capacity to develop and coordinate the writing of the bid as the P.I. in 2015-16 and to project manage this large-scale, ambitious and complex PER project in 2016-17.

The strategic PER objectives for developing and delivering Curiosity Carnival were as follows:

• Networks & Collaboration: to build and foster PER contacts, partnerships and relationships across the University between the staff of Research Services, GLAM, the Academic Divisions, Public Affairs Directorate, Departments and researchers.

• Building Capacity: to build public engagement skills and learning in the hundreds of academics, researchers and DPhil students that will take part in Curiosity Carnival through the provision of coaching, training and experiential learning.

• Quality: increase understanding and importance of developing and delivering high-quality PER activities.

• Profile raising: to run a highly-visible, large-scale PER event (Oxford’s largest to date) to raise the profile of PER at Oxford and demonstrate that the University values this activity.

• New audiences: to reach out to public audiences that have not engaged with the University’s researchers before, including those from lower socio-economic groups.

• Evaluation: to develop and deliver a robust quantitative and qualitative evaluation and impact assessment, gather shared learning and raise awareness of the importance of evaluating PER at Oxford and how to evidence impact.

• Legacy: For the majority of participating researchers to take ‘one more step’ in their PER journey in the 2017-18 academic year (e.g. apply for a PER Seed Fund; or apply
for PE as part of a research grant; take part in a PER training course; take part in future PER activities with GLAM or at festivals).

A six-month engagement and communications campaign was delivered in the lead up to the main event. This included a marketing campaign (see left for an example of some of the outputs produced); online activities to engage schools audiences such as the Oxford Sparks animation and ‘I’m a researcher get me out of here!’ activity and four ‘mini’ Curiosity Carnivals in East Oxford, where residents have been less likely to engage with the University or its researchers.

Following an intensive period of planning and development, Curiosity Carnival took place on 29 September 2017, alongside events in over 300 cities in 30 countries across Europe. The event was a huge festival of PER – a city-wide programme of researcher-led activities across the University of Oxford’s museums, libraries, gardens and woods and also through street activities in the city centre, developed and delivered in partnership with over 100 staff from the Research Services; Academic Divisions; GLAM; Public Affairs Directorate, Widening Access and Participation team; TORCH, Oxford Sparks and more.

The main event attracted thousands of young people, adults and families who engaged with hundreds of DPhil students, researchers and academics through a whole series of creative formats: live experiments, games, stalls, busking, debates, music, dance; a pub-style quiz; theatre; interactives; songs, live experiments; the Great Research Bake-off where researchers explained their work through the medium of cake and tarts; and the ‘Living Library’, where the public were able to ‘borrow’ a researcher to chat to them about their work for 10 minutes.
4.4 Public Engagement with Research Champions

4.4.1 Academic Champion for Public Engagement with Research

Following their first year in 2015-16, the University Academic Champion has continued to play a vital role in 2016-17, demonstrating institutional leadership and senior academic buy-in for PER at Oxford.

Professor Sarah Whatmore, Deputy Head of the Social Sciences Division, was the University’s Academic Champion from September 2015 until January 2017, stepping down from this role on taking up her new appointment as Pro-VC for Education at Oxford.

Following a call for expressions of interest, shortlisting and an interview selection panel, led by Professor Ian Walmsley (Pro-VC, Research & Innovation), Professor Alison Woollard was chosen as the University's new Public Engagement with Research Champion and took up the mantel in February 2017.

Professor Woollard has an excellent and active track record in engaging the public with her research – reaching millions through high-profile broadcast events such as presenting the Royal Institution Christmas Lectures, to smaller but more intimate events such as Bright Club and Pint of Science. Professor Woollard has also been active in the training and mentoring of academics that are keen to get involved in PER and her contribution to public engagement with genetics was recognised with the 2015 JBS Haldane award from the Genetics Society.

The key activities undertaken by the University’s Academic Champion in the 2016-17 academic year include:

Professor Sarah Whatmore:

- Host and keynote speaker for the launch of the University’s Public Engagement with Research strategy (Michaelmas Term 16/17);
- Chair of the Academic Panel for the PER Seed Fund, providing final ratification of the funding recommendations (Michaelmas Term 16/17);
- One-to-one meetings with the CSF PM to discuss strategy, actions plans and priorities.

Professor Alison Woollard:

- Chair of the Vice-Chancellor’s Public Engagement with Research Awards Academic Judging Panel (Hilary Term 16/17);
- Providing senior-level guidance and feedback on the development of the new training workshops – Building Public Engagement into Research Grants;
Understanding and evidencing Public Engagement as a Route to Research Impact (Hilary Term 16/17);

● Chair of the GLAM-PER workshop in which the final results of the GLAM-PER scoping review were presented and discussed (Hilary Term 16/17);

● Academic Lead for the PER proposal to secure HEIF funding for the continuation of the strategic PER activities in 2017/18 that had previously been supported by CSF (Trinity Term 16/17);

● Reporting to the University’s Research Committee re: progress on the implementation of the University’s Public Engagement with Research Strategic Plan (including CSF) and Curiosity Carnival (Trinity Term 16/17);

● Panel member for the University-wide Lunchtime Seminar – Innovation in Research (Trinity Term 16/17);

● Host and compere for the Vice-Chancellor’s Public Engagement with Research Awards Ceremony (Trinity Term 16/17).

4.4.2 PER Academic Advisory Network

Following the success of the PER Advisory Group, an academic professional services staff network with cross-University representation that was set-up in 2015-16, we came to the conclusion that a ‘parallel’ group of staff made up of academics and researchers would also be very beneficial to provide strategic guidance and support.

The Public Engagement with Research Academic Advisory Network (PER AAN) was set up in Trinity Term (Term 3) 2016-17 and had its first meeting in November 2017.

The group’s membership consists of academic representation from each of the Divisions (including a mixture of senior, mid and early career level), GLAM, the Continuing Education Department and the Colleges.

This group will meet once a term to review progress of the PER Strategic Plan against the objectives and to inform and help shape future action plans and funding proposals.

Members of this group are also tasked with acting as ambassadors and champions of PER within their constituent part of the University and to provide support for other activities throughout the year. This will include reviewing internal PER Seed fund grant proposals; judging the entries to the VC’s Public Engagement with Research Awards; and being a Chair or speaker at the various Public Engagement with Research events, seminars and training workshops that will take place.

4.4.3 Other Senior Ambassadors

Demonstrating buy-in from other leaders in the University has continued to be important in supporting a culture of PER practice at Oxford. In addition to the Academic Champion role, many other senior staff have provided leadership and support for the CSF work in 2016-17, including:
The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Louise Richardson, has demonstrated her support through the VC’s PER Awards (see left); her support of Curiosity Carnival (including raising awareness of the project at a Times Higher Education Summit) and dedicating part of her annual VC’s oration (which is an important and long standing tradition at Oxford) in October 2017 to ‘Public Engagement’. Review of the previous oration transcripts available online indicates that this is the first time that a VC at Oxford has had a significant part of their oration focused on Public Engagement.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research & Innovation and CSF PI, Professor Ian Walmsley (see right), has ensured that PER has been part of the University’s Research Committee’s work over the last year, including an in-depth discussion on Oxford applying for an Engage Watermark and most importantly – has made PER one of the 10 programmes of activity to be supported through Oxford’s HEIF allocation (along with Corporate and Policy Engagement; Enterprise; etc) in 2017/18 – providing critical financial support for the continuation of the CSF programme.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor for GLAM, Professor Anne Trefethen played a key PER leadership role in 2016-17 as Chair of the Oversight Committee for Curiosity Carnival and presented the project to Council (the highest governing body of the University) and has been a proactive stakeholder and supporter of the GLAM–PER scoping work, as were all the Directors of the six GLAM departments.

Head of MPLS Division, Professor Donal Bradley championed the creation of a new PER Academic Champion for the MPLS Division - Professor David Pyle (Department of Earth Sciences), was confirmed in post in October 2017.

Humanities Division Academic Champion for Knowledge Exchange, Professor Kirsten Shepherd-Barr has PER as part of her remit, as does the Academic Director of TORCH, The Oxford Research Centre for the Humanities, Professor Phillip Bullock. Humanities Associate Head of Research, Professor Dan Grimley, invited the CSF PM to attend the Humanities Research Committee to discuss the PER strategy.

Previous Academic Champion for PER, Professor Sarah Whatmore will take up her role as Head of the Social Sciences Division in January 2018 meaning that another champion of PER will be in a very senior and influential position going forward.

Head of Medical Sciences Division, Professor Chris Kennard was a key member of the academic team for the Brain Diaries exhibition: a partnership PER project between the
Museum of Natural History and Oxford Neuroscience launched in March 2017. Professor Kennard spoke about the importance of PER in his speech at the exhibition launch.

4.5 Reward & Recognition

We developed and delivered the second Vice-Chancellor’s Public Engagement with Research Awards in July 2017, building on the successes and lessons learnt from the inaugural CSF-funded awards that took place in 2016.

We utilised a similar process to 2016: Three categories of Awards (Project Awards; Early Career Researchers Awards and Building Capacity Awards) and a two stage review and judging process followed by a celebratory event, alongside a dedicated communications campaign:

- **Marketing:** Communications to raise awareness of the VC PER Awards across the whole University and to encourage entries.

- **Review:** The entries were reviewed by a panel of academic support staff (e.g. Public Engagement Facilitators; Research Facilitators) from different parts of the University (Research Services; Divisions; Departments; GLAM; Cont. Ed).

- **Judging:** The higher rated entries were taken forward to the Academic Judging Panel who made the final recommendations for the Awards. This was chaired by the University Academic Champion for PER; with academics and researchers from each of the Divisions; GLAM and the Continuing Education Department, including two VC PER Award winners from 2016-17.

- **Ceremony:** A celebratory event took place with an awards presentation, compered by the Academic Champion for PER; a keynote speech from the VC and guest external speakers from the three key public funders of UK research (see below). This was followed by an early evening reception. A short film of the ceremony is [here](#).

![Fig 5: VC PER Awards Ceremony Guest Presenters (L to R): Dr Steven Hill, Head of Research Policy, HEFCE; Dr Jenni Chambers, Head of PER, RCUK and Dr Simon Chaplin, Director of Culture and Society, Wellcome Trust.](#)
Communications campaign: Shared news of the winners through internal and external communications; external media coverage; a booklet of case studies and 1 minute films of each of the winners.

Professor Armand D’Angour, Faculty of Classics has had an outstanding ‘PER Journey’ through CSF including becoming a VC PER Awards Winner in 2016-17:

Awarded a small PER Seed Fund grant through CSF 2015-16 to explore recreating the sounds of ancient Greek music for his research and to collaborate with musicians and engage the public through performances with reconstructed instruments which has led to:

- a TORCH Knowledge Exchange Fellowship in 2016-17;
- A VC PER Award in 2016-17;
- Ancient Greek Music Performance & Research Engagement event at Curiosity Carnival (see bottom left image) and took part in many other public engagement events;

  “One of my favourite events from the #CuriosityCarnival tonight was at the Pitt Rivers Museum. It showed some very interesting ties of experimental archaeology for musical instruments, in this case the Aulos. Absolutely fantastic” Public visitor.

- Opened up new research avenues that are being pursued by others; the musicians involved have also reported significant benefit from their involvement;
- Reached a million listeners through his interview on the Radio 4 Today programme to discuss his work and shared the sounds of Ancient Greek Music (November 2018);
- Selected as a potential REF Impact Case Study by the Humanities Division;
- Member of Oxford’s new PER Academic Advisory Network which first met in November 2017.
Improvements to 2017 were as follows:

We developed an online entry process with the aim of improving efficiency and the gathering of key data (e.g. demographics of researchers that entered).

More time and resources were spent on marketing to encourage entries from an even more diverse range of departments. Furthermore, we significantly increased the internal and external communications about the Award winners to inspire others and share best practice raise awareness of what high-quality PER ‘looks like’ by creating higher-quality production films of the Award winners; social media; online communications and printed materials and to attract external press coverage (see left: full page colour article in the Oxford Mail).

Another new improvement was the introduction of highly-commended Awards to recognise an even greater number of projects and people (see image below middle: Professor Sondra Hausner, Faculty of Theology and Religion, with her Highly Commended certificate for ‘The Spirits of Crossbones Graveyard’)

We organised a late afternoon/ early evening awards ceremony with set-dressing (see images of the ceremony below left – with star cloth!) and a post-ceremony drinks reception in the museum’s dinosaur gallery (see below right: VC PER Award winner Professor Gary Lock, Continuing Education Dept and Institute of Archeology at the reception) which created a much greater sense of celebration (rather than the lunchtime event that was held in 2016).

While we have listed the VC PER Awards as the key activity under ‘Reward and Recognition’, anecdotal evidence indicates that many of the CSF activities are considered to be reward and recognition by researchers. This includes: selecting researchers’ PER projects to be filmed as Best Practice Case Studies and being profiled on other communication channels; being awarded a PER Seed Fund grant and being shortlisted to take part in high-profile events such as Curiosity Carnival. Furthermore, other anecdotal evidence indicates
that the PER Strategic Plan was viewed by PER-active academics and researchers as recognition that the University’s values this activity, and therefore their work. Furthermore, the MPLS Division have agreed a new ‘Public Engagement with Research’ award as part of their annual Impact Awards; the OxTalent Awards (celebrating innovative digital engagement at Oxford) have updated their Public Engagement category and the selection criteria to include PER; and the CSF PM was a reviewer for the ESRC Impact Awards.

4.6 Profile Raising, Communications & Stakeholder Engagement

Communications and stakeholder engagement activities have raised awareness of the diversity of PER activities; demonstrated the University’s commitment to PER; increased awareness of the support, guidance, training and opportunities available; showcased best practice; inspired new ideas and projects; and encouraged buy-in from academic, research and support staff. Our approach during 2016–17 was as follows:

4.6.1 Visual identity

The visual identity developed in 2015–16 utilised the ‘classic’ Oxford skyline and (see left) which was important for the first year of profile-raising to encourage PER to be perceived as part of Oxford.

A new visual identity for Public Engagement with Research was created in 2016–17 (see right) that focuses on people. This visual identity is now used to brand all the outputs and activities developed by the ‘central’ PER office and by other Divisional PER teams as required. The only exception to this is Curiosity Carnival – which had its own logo and visual identity.

4.6.2 Best Practice Case Studies

We produced two new PER Best Practice Case Study Films in 2016–17, featuring the work of the following academics:

Professor Marcus du Sautoy, Charles Simonyi Professor for the Public Understanding of Science; Professor of Mathematics, Mathematical Institute. This 4 minute film showcases Marcus’s PER Seed Fund project – Symmetry in Sound and includes key messages on the benefits of PER for researchers and the importance of evaluation.
Professor Karen Leeder, Professor of Modern German Literature, Faculty of Medieval & Modern Languages; Fellow of New College; Associate Head of Humanities Division (Education). This 4 minute film showcase’s Karen’s work in Engaging the Public with German poetry and includes key messages on the benefits of PER to researchers.

These films form part of a growing series of PER Best Practice Case Studies at Oxford— the first film Good Germs; Bad Germs, funded by CSF 2015–16, featured the work of social scientists as part of citizen science project. These films are in addition to the animations produced with support from CSF in 2015-16 (An Introduction to Public Engagement; Planning High-Quality Public Engagement).

4.6.3 PER events

To continue to raise awareness of the University’s continuing commitment to this agenda, demonstrate senior-buy-in, and raise the profile of other strategic activities, we held a reception event at the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford in December 2016 to publically launch the PER strategic plan. We also capitalised on this opportunity to share plans for Curiosity Carnival – Oxford’s biggest PER event to date.

The reception (see left) was targeted at senior and/or influential staff from Divisions and Departments who were not yet PER ‘converts’ or active in this area; along with those that were already champions for PER (e.g. PER-active academics; VC PER Awards winners; PER Seed Fund awardees; senior PER facilitation staff) and some key external guests including research funders and CSF Project Managers.

The event consisted of speeches from senior staff; dissemination of the designed and printed PER Strategic Plan and a networking reception.

Speeches were made by Professor Sarah Whatmore (Academic Champion for Public Engagement with Research) on the vision and importance of the PER strategic plan; while Professor Ian Walmsley (Pro-VC, Research & Innovation and CSF PI) raised awareness of Curiosity Carnival and Dr Laura van Broekhoven (Director, Pitt-Rivers Museum) spoke about the opportunities for GLAM–PER partnerships.

4.6.4 Online and printed communications

Throughout 2016-17, we have continued to raise awareness of PER at Oxford including communications focusing on: strategic activities and outputs; case studies of best practice; key PER news from inside and outside the University; PER support and guidance; internal and external funding calls and opportunities to get involved via:
Online

- The University’s main website, which has a significant reach, of which the PER portal is part of.

![University website screenshot](image1)

**Fig 4:** PER news and activities featured on the University’s homepage 8 times during the 2017–18

- PER digest: a monthly email newsletter written and disseminated by the CSF PM with links to key internal and external updates and news; funding calls and other opportunities.

- Divisional and Departmental websites and newsletters.

- RISN (Research and Innovation Support Network) and the Communications Network mailing lists, which reaches over 800 research, research-support and communications staff.

![PER digest image](image2)

- Social media: In particular via the Twitter accounts of @UniofOxford (which has a significant reach); the Divisions and Departments.
Printed communications

- Blueprint: the University’s magazine published a number of PER news items and feature articles throughout the year (see below: Blueprint Article on Curiosity Carnival).

- A chapter on PER was first introduced to the ‘University of Oxford: In Brief’ booklet in 2015-16 following a successful pitch to the University’s Public Affairs Directorate (PAD) re: the importance of raising awareness of this activity. This is a core corporate communications publication produced annually and PER has continued to be profiled with an updated chapter the 2016-17 In Brief booklet.

- The University’s Annual Review featured four articles on PER including the VC PER Awardees.

- Media: Full-page colour articles and shorter news items were covered by the Oxford Mail and the Oxford Times on the VC PER Awards and Curiosity Carnival (see right).
4.6.5 Presentations and meetings

Presentations at Committees and other key meetings have targeted influential stakeholders across the University to: raise awareness of the strategic importance of PER; of the strategic PER activities taking place and the resulting outcomes and impacts; and to gain feedback and insight from senior staff. Some examples are provided below:

- Presentation and discussion of the PER Strategic plan at the Humanities Division Research Committee.

- Presentation and discussion at the University’s Research Committee re: progress of the CSF project; a review of progress against the objectives of the PER Strategy; applying for an Engage Watermark; and a strategic overview of Curiosity Carnival.

- Presentation of the Curiosity Carnival project at the University’s Council Meeting (the highest governing body of the University, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor).

- Presentation and discussion at the Faculty of Linguistics’ ‘Away Day’ and the Continuing Education Department’s ‘Research Colloquium’ - a termly lunchtime seminar focused on a specific theme for PIs and senior academics:

  “Thank you for coming in this week for a very useful hour explaining PER to our academics. I hope this results in a longer term awareness and engagement from our people.” Academic, Cont. Ed. Dept.

  “Thank YOU for coming – it was a great session and I think you’ve got them all inspired!” Research Facilitator, Cont. Ed. Dept.

4.7 Shared Learning

Sharing successes, challenges and learning has continued to be at the heart of our CSF journey. For example:

- As with the first year of CSF, the PER Advisory Group has played a key role in 2016-17, providing support and guidance for the development and delivery of all the CSF activities; contributing valuable insight from the perspectives of the different academic Divisions.

- The CSF PM and other Oxford PER staff have: taken part in the five Catalyst Seed Fund workshops that took place; visited the University of Southampton for the day to discuss our CSF projects in-depth; had in-depth discussions on developing the PER strategy, incorporating PER into grants and European Researchers Night with Imperial College London and the Universities of Cambridge, Glasgow and Aberdeen.

- The CSF PM and other staff from Oxford’s PER team participated in the following events during 2016-17: Wellcome’s Institutional Strategic Support Fund (ISSF)
workshop; NCCPE’s Engage 2016, NCCPE’s PER and the REF workshop; European Researchers’ Night Coordinators Day in Brussels.

• The CSF PM was invited to: the Royal Society’s Public Engagement Committee to present Oxford’s CSF work re: embedding PER as part of research culture and practice and to help inform the Royal Society’s Public Engagement strategy; participate in 3 x PER workshops at Wellcome re: the new Wellcome strategy; Provision for Public Engagement funding and facilitating collaborations between artists and researchers; speak at Oxford’s TORCH PER Summer School for Early Career Researchers. Incidentally the latter changed from a ‘PE’ to a ‘PER’ summer school in 2016–17 in light of the University’s PER strategy and focus on this area and they have adjusted the programming and content as a result.

4.8 Evaluate the outcomes and impact of CSF

We have conducted an evaluation of the CSF project, gathering evidence on the outcomes and impacts of whether our actions have helped foster an environment in which high-quality PER can flourish at Oxford and have established baseline measures for future use in assessing impact and gathering evidence of culture change.

We used a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods and tools to explore outcomes and impacts at the strategic and institutional level together with exploring potential change at the Divisional and Departmental level and evaluations that focused on specific projects and activities.

The key aspects to the evaluation that took place in 2016–17 are as follows:

• Developed a logic model for Oxford’s strategic PER programme, focusing on three key evaluation questions at the beginning of CSF year 2 (July 2016).
• Conducted an EDGE analysis at the start of the CSF project (October 2015) and at the end of CSF years 1 (October 2016) and 2 (October 2017).
• Conducted a staff survey to explore changes in the support for PER over the last two years (July 2017).
• Conducted qualitative interviews with staff from across the University (July and August 2017).
• Delivered two evaluation workshops for the PER Seed Fund Awardees (January 2017) and evaluated these workshops. Each PER Seed Fund Awardee was also required to provide final reports on the outputs, outcomes and impacts of their project, together with lessons learnt.
• Conducted an evaluation of The Conversation (April 2017)
• Evaluated the pilot training courses that were developed re: PE into Research Grants and PE as a Route to Research Impact (May 2017).
• Conducted a significant evaluation and impact assessment for *Curiosity Carnival* – European Researchers’ Night (ongoing).

• Gathered metrics, for example: Google Analytics (to explore the use of the PER webpages); YouTube and Facebook views (PER Best Practice Case Study Films and PER animations); Twitter engagement; number of PER Digest sign-ups; no. of media articles; number and demographics of researchers who applied to the PER Seed Fund, entered for the VC PER Awards or participated in *Curiosity Carnival*.

• X5 is Oxford’s grant costing tool – all research grant applicants, irrespective of the funder, must complete an X5 form before they can be submitted. We worked with the X5 team, based in Research Services, to explore how we track the number of grant applications that include funds for Public Engagement. After much discussion and deliberation to determine the best way to do this, we agreed to add a 10th compulsory question to the X5 tool: “Have you applied for funds for Public Engagement?” We now have a baseline measure of the number and % of grant applications in which the grant applicants state they have included PE.

• We have conducted a review of Oxford’s REF impact case studies that included public engagement. This will be used as a baseline for comparison with REF 2021.

### 4.9 Staffing & Internal Governance

• Professor Ian Walmsley, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research & Innovation) is the CSF project PI and worked closely with Dr Glenn Swafford (Director of Research Services and line manager to the CSF Project Manager). Remit: ensure PER is embedded into core and senior governance structures; identify additional funding opportunities for strategic PER activities; demonstrate PER buy-in at a senior Academic level. Professor Walmsley is also Chair of the University’s Research Committee which has oversight of the University’s Public Engagement with Research Strategic Plan. The portfolio and remit of the Pro-VC for Research & Innovation and the Terms of Reference for the University’s Research Committee now both explicitly include PER.

• Professor Alison Woollard (Dept of Biochemistry; Dean, Hertford College) became Oxford’s Academic Champion for PER in January 2017, taking over from Professor Sarah Whatmore, who stepped down in order to take up her the position of Pro-VC for Education at Oxford. Remit: Academic Lead for strategic direction, development and delivery of the University-wide PER.
programme, including CSF (which has formed the core of the 2015–16 and 2016–17 strategic PER programme); senior academic ambassador for PER; stakeholder engagement with senior academic staff.

- Dr Lesley Paterson, Head of Public Engagement with Research, Research Services. Remit: Professional Services Lead for the strategic direction, development and delivery of the University-wide PER programme; CSF Project Manager (PM); works closely with and supports the Academic Champion for PER, the Director of Research Services, the Pro-VC for Research & Innovation and the Pro-VC for GLAM and other senior staff as appropriate; liaises with academic and support staff across the University to gain input, buy-in and support; facilitates increased coordination and joint-working with Divisional PER representatives; develops and delivers the CSF activities; PI and senior project manager for Curiosity Carnival.

- The CSF project was also supported by fixed-term or temporary staff that have assisted in the development, delivery and evaluation of the activities. We also utilised the services of consultants to support parts of the PER programme (specifically the evaluation; the PER-GLAM scoping work; PER into research grants and impact development work).

- The Public Engagement with Research Advisory Group (PER AG) continued to be influential and very effective in providing guidance and support for the development and delivery of the CSF 2016–17 activities.

  The group meets twice a term and membership is as follows: Chair: Dr Lesley Paterson, Head of Public Engagement with Research, Research Services; Director, Research Services (Dr Glenn Swafford); Public Engagement Leads/ Professional Support Staff from the four Academic Divisions, GLAM; Cont. Ed and Public Affairs Directorate (Naomi Gibson; Dr Michaela Livingstone-Banks; Victoria McGuiness; Aileen Marshall-Brown; Liz Sanders; Lucy Shaw, Dr Hattie Warburton; Beth Gibbs; Victoria Pearson).

- And last but by no means least, the progress made through the CSF would simply not have been possible without the buy-in, support and participation of the many hundreds of staff and students across the University, including academics; researchers and DPhils; Divisional, Departmental and GLAM Professional Services, Professional Services and Curatorial staff; the offices of the VC and Pro-VCs; the Registrar and University Administration Services, in particular those from Research Services and the Public Affairs Directorate; and colleagues from the Colleges.
5.0 Outputs, outcomes, impacts & lessons learnt

We have reflected upon and evaluated the programme by gathering evidence on the outputs, outcomes and impacts of the CSF and matched-fund supported-activities towards fostering an environment in which high-quality PER can flourish at Oxford, and exploring how we can improve and increase the effectiveness of our activities.

We used a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods and tools to evaluate at the institutional, Divisional and Departmental level together with project-specific evaluations:

5.1 Logic Model

To ensure we also focused on the ‘big’ questions (in addition to evaluating projects and activities) and whether we had made progress towards our higher-level aims, we developed a Logic Model that focused on three key questions. These, together with our CSF objectives, provided the focus for our evaluation.

1. Have more high-quality PER activities taken place as a result of our activities?
2. Do we have a shared understanding of PER at Oxford?
3. Have we demonstrated that the University values PER?

5.2. EDGE analysis

The following EDGE Analysis, conducted in October 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 demonstrates that significant positive changes have occurred in terms of support for PER at Oxford, as a result of new activities or new ways of working, all of which were directly supported or enabled by the CSF. See figure left and table overleaf.

University of Oxford: EDGE Analysis

![EDGE Analysis Spider Diagram for the University of Oxford](image)

1 – Embryonic
2 – Developing
3 – Gripping
4 – Embedding.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROCESS</th>
<th>Mission</th>
<th>Developing:</th>
<th>Gripping: Public Engagement with Research (PER) is referenced within the institutional strategy; an institution-wide PER strategy is under development.</th>
<th>Gripping: University PER Strategic Plan developed, delivered and signed off.</th>
<th>Towards Embedding: University PER Strategic Plan is launched and now publically available. There are several key examples of where PER has been considered in strategic decisions and developments in the institution.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Developing:</td>
<td>Some of the institution’s senior team act as champions for PER.</td>
<td>Gripping: Academic Champion for PER; VC-endorsed PER Awards; Pro-VC, Research &amp; Innovation (R&amp;I) and University Research Committee – PER is now part of their remit and Terms of Reference.</td>
<td>Embedding: Senior leaders who champion PER include: VC; Pro-VCs for R&amp;I and GLAM; Academic Champion for PER; Heads of Division; some senior PIs; New Academic Champion for MPLS. Many other senior leaders have a good understanding of the importance and value of public engagement to the institution’s agenda.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>Developing:</td>
<td>PER occasionally features in institutional internal and external communications.</td>
<td>Developing: PER features more frequently in internal communications.</td>
<td>Gripping (towards Embedding): PER appears regularly and prominently in the institution’s internal and external communications; its strategic importance is highlighted, and some resources and support have been allocated to sustain this.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Developing:</td>
<td>Some PER activities are coordinated.</td>
<td>Developing: PER Advisory Group (PERAG) set-up; development of European Researchers Night which is a joint-University wide coordinated project.</td>
<td>Gripping: Oversight of PER is now the responsibility of the University’s Research Committee; Co-ordination of PER is looked after by PERAG and the new PER Academic Advisory Network. There are resources in place to support PER.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Gripping:</td>
<td>Formal PER training and professional development opportunities are provided for staff and research students across the institution.</td>
<td>Gripping: Work ongoing for a more coordinated and coherent approach.</td>
<td>Gripping (towards Embedding): Staff and research students are encouraged and supported in accessing training, support, guidance and informal learning to develop their PER skills and knowledge of engagement.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Embryonic:</td>
<td>Staff are not formally rewarded or recognised at the institutional level for their PER activities.</td>
<td>Gripping: VC’s PER Awards.</td>
<td>Gripping: VC’s PER Awards; MPLS now also have a ‘PER Award’ category in their Divisional Impact Awards; OxTalent Public Engagement Award Category</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Developing:</td>
<td>There are PER opportunities for staff in some faculties and departments.</td>
<td>Developing: An introduction to PER training course is available to staff across all Divisions in 2016-17.</td>
<td>Gripping: There are opportunities for many staff members to get involved in PER; and there is a drive to expand opportunities to all.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Students</td>
<td>Developing:</td>
<td>There are PER opportunities for students in some faculties and departments.</td>
<td>Developing: Work initiated by MPLS with Doctoral Training Centres re: PER training.</td>
<td>Gripping: Many DPhils have the opportunity to get involved in PER and are encouraged and supported to do so. There is a drive to expand opportunities to all.</td>
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<td>Public</td>
<td>Developing:</td>
<td>There are some opportunities for ‘two-way’ PER, including listening to public views and co-creating/collaborating with the public.</td>
<td>Gripping: University Community Engagement Committee now in place.</td>
<td>Gripping: University Community Engagement plans continue; Curiosity Carnival took place engaging over 9000 members of the community and tens of thousands more online.</td>
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5.3 Staff Survey

A staff survey was conducted in July 2017 to explore whether there has been any change in the culture, support and understanding of PER across the University due to the Catalyst Seed Funding. We were particularly keen to know if the University-wide activities were penetrating into Departments and research groups. The survey was targeted at professional services staff and academics with administration roles (e.g. Associate Heads of Research; Knowledge Exchange Champions) in as many different in Departments as possible as a proxy for what was happening across the University. The survey was undertaken by an independent, external evaluation consultancy to encourage staff to be as honest as possible in their responses – respondents were informed that the University’s PER team would only have access to the anonymised data.

An edited version of the Evaluation Report, written by the evaluation consultancy is provided here:

Staff Survey Report

A total of 72 research facilitators and managers; communication officers, public engagement coordinators, GLAM staff and researchers from across different parts of the University responded to the survey.

Respondents were asked to reflect on what, if anything, has changed over the last 2 years (i.e. since CSF funding started). The headline results are as follows:

● Over 70% reported improvements (greatly or moderately) in understanding of what PER is.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local: Understanding of what PER is</th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>30%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>70%</th>
<th>80%</th>
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<tr>
<td>% of respondents who reported improvements in understanding what PER is</td>
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<td>moderately improved</td>
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<td>greatly improved</td>
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● Respondents commonly described PER as a way to inform and inspire the public; mentions of ‘two-way engagement’ and ‘mutual benefit’ were also frequent (see quote below), with collaborative working mentioned in around 1 in 3 responses.

“A two-way conversation or activity between researchers and an external audience about current research, that has the potential to benefit both parties” Communications manager/officer
• Over 90% of respondents reported an increase in both the importance given to PER and in the profile of PER at the University level; around 70% reported an increase at the local level (i.e. at the department level or their ‘part’ of the University).

• Over 80% felt there had been an increase in practical support for PER at University level, 60% thought this at local level.

• 68% noted increased reward and recognition at the University level compared to 53% at local level.

• 74% indicated an increase in senior management support at University level compared to 47% at local level.

*Figure 7: Staff survey respondents’ views of the changes in the importance, support and profile of PER at the University-Level (‘All’) and within their ‘part’ of the University (‘Local’).*
A number of respondents commented on the value of dedicated PER staff as drivers of increased public engagement both through practical support and because they ‘symbolised’ commitment to PER.

“The appointment of facilitators at senior level in the University and MSD has both sent a clear message that PER is important and also practically improved central support in terms of linking up and advertising opportunities.”
- Communications manager/officer

Some commented that the absence or loss of these PER staff at the local level (i.e. Department level) sometimes held back the implementation of the PER strategy. There was also a sense that the existing support was spread relatively thin.

“I feel that at a central level public engagement is being taken much more seriously now - it has been noticeable over the past couple of years that the PE awards are high profile. Some large departments (eg Physics) also have engagement officers but in practice they [departments] are under-resourced and could use their energy and skills to do more if better resourced.”
- Research manager/facilitator

Overall the comments demonstrated positivity about the central support for PER:

- Reward and recognition via the VC awards was noted in a number of responses alongside the value of the workshops;
- It was felt that networking and sharing across the University had improved;
- There was greater clarity about what PER is.

Locally, the comments reflected that the picture regarding PER was more variable:

- It was felt that where research is funded by corporates, there is no strategic incentive for public engagement.
- There was a sense that once minimum public engagement requirements were met, academics would still return to focus on ‘real work’ (i.e. research).
- There was a lack of senior leadership support at the local level.
- There was a desire for more reward and recognition at the local level.
5.3 Qualitative interviews

Eight interviews were conducted with nine staff from across the University to explore whether the culture for PER across the University may have changed over the last two years, lessons learnt and recommendations for the future activities. These interviews were conducted by the evaluation consultancy to provide impartiality and encourage honest reflections, both positive and negative; and provide an independent and objective analysis and report. The staff were selected to hear views from across the University at different career levels/roles and that had been involved in different parts of the strategic PER programme:

Academics/researchers:

1. Professor Anne Trefethen, Pro-VC, GLAM
2. Professor Alison Woollard, Academic Champion for PER
3. Professor David Griffiths, Continuing Education Department
4. Professor Susan Jebb, Medical Sciences
5. Professor Richard Scholar, Humanities
6. Dr Tom Hart, Life Sciences

Professional Services staff:

7. Dr Sam Sneddon and Aileen Marshall Brown, Social Sciences Division
8. Naomi Gibson, Medical Sciences Division

A summary version of the Qualitative analysis report from the interviews, written by the evaluation consultants, is provided here:

Qualitative Survey Report

Culture change

All of the interviewees described significant culture change with respect to PER having taken place over the period of the CSF.

Several noted that the nature of public engagement had changed. Whereas previously, it tended to be low key, with traditional offers such as lectures and visits to schools, it was now becoming higher profile, more ambitious, more strategic, more varied and more valued:

“If you look at where we were two years ago and you look at where we are now, public engagement with research, I think we have moved immeasurably”

“I think, in the past there has definitely been a sense that somehow it was kind of ‘nice to do’ but it wasn’t necessarily ‘necessary to do’ and so there
was a sense people should perhaps do it in their own time. You know, when they finished all their 'real work' they could. And I think those days are gone. It is seen absolutely as an integral part of people’s job as a scientist.”

Interviewees were also impressed by the increasing quality and ambition of the projects submitted to the VC PER awards:

“It may help them to do their own engagement better by giving examples but it also helps them by just providing a bit of competition. I think the standard, you know, the difference from last year to this years I think has been remarkable.”

“I was chairing the panel of judges for the last round, and I was just amazed at what people were doing, and how diverse the projects were.”

“[my Head of Division] said ‘I want to win the Overall Award [the VC’s winner]’. So it’s that competitive nature that really drove it…”

However, there was also a sense with some interviewees that progress was patchy and had not yet infiltrated throughout the University:

“There’s been immense progress. Well, at least, there are a number of academics now who at least understand what it is, but it feels like we’re just scratching the surface. Is that fair?”

“So I think good things are happening but it’s quite slow.”

High profile endorsement

Interviewees repeatedly mentioned a number of strategies that they felt were key to what has been achieved so far, in particular, the high profile support and endorsement for PER. This was created through a number of measures – chiefly:

- The VC awards
- The PER strategy
- PER Academic Champion(s)
“...and of course the Vice Chancellor’s Prize has made a big difference to people again and very aware of the importance of public. I mean it’s really raised the profile and got more people engaged and talking about it.”

“I think the academic champion works pretty well as well, as a sort of way of making sure that strategy is rolled out in an effective way.”

PER Seed Fund

The availability of funding for public engagement, from internal and external sources, was identified as essential in supporting increased PER activity. This was described as being important both at a strategic level and a practical level. At the strategic level, it demonstrates that PER is important, demonstrates leadership in terms of approach and good practice, and drives up quality through competition. At the practical level, it pays for support services and expertise, buys researchers’ time out of other activities and pays for facilities and resources.

“So the Seed Funds have been really a good catalyst for a lot of people.”

"... All of that time is time that you’re not spending doing something else and so the award I held funded a partial buy out from teaching. That bought me some time, it also provided me with money to pay for filming, to pay for the sandwiches and the crisps at the lunchtime public [meeting] and all of those things otherwise I would have been scrabbling around for that money.”

"These are small awards, but they, the support they provide is really valuable and it goes quite a long way." 

Professional services staff

The researchers interviewed were emphatic that the University needs professional support for PER. Similarly, interviewees from professional services were very clear that localised support for PER was lacking.

Areas where dedicated PER support was valuable (in no particular order) are:

- Help with funding applications
- Introduce more creative & innovative approaches
- Support creation of networks
- Provide structures for where PE can happen (e.g. Curiosity Carnival)
- Brokerage – linking people together
- Provide training

Interviewees felt that Lesley Paterson’s appointment as Head of PER with a remit across the whole university had been pivotal in enabling the changes they had seen, but that all the other PER support staff across the University were no less essential and these posts required ongoing and increasing investment.

“So in terms of what we’re doing I think the central team have done a great job of moving stuff forward “

“The fact that all the Divisions came together to invest time and energy and funding in making sure that we had Lesley’s post and provided some additional support for that I think has been really helpful. The caveat being it’s actually not enough. And actually we need to consider how we support this activity across the board and I think we as a Division need to look quite seriously at it. Because it’s being done on the side at the moment and that’s not helpful.”

“For me, the University’s support is good as it is now. I think Lesley really gives it - the University - you know, “this is a ‘university commitment’ [message]”. But then actually having people at a Divisional level, Naomi, and then for us, down at a department level with Dan, it’s really, really helpful.”

“I think the other thing that is probably important is to enable researchers to have a lot of one on one support.”

“There is a big discussion in [my Division] at the moment, that obviously REF impact is not just public engagement. There is nobody else in the Division office, there is only me [for impact]. Public engagement is part of it...but what does that mean for my role? Does my role get morphed and stretched?”

Training

There was agreement that training is important, however, this is a developing area which carries some challenges. In particular that:

- Oxford needs a greater breadth of training – although it was acknowledged that this is something that is being discussed and developed. e.g. training on bid writing
and on evaluation.

- Training the ‘right’ people – three issues were identified in this. How to provide a training portfolio for those that a) will actually use their training and take steps forward in public engagement b) those with PER experience and c) those who are enthusiastic about public engagement, but were not at a stage in their career where they had a good body of high quality research to work with.

“And that’s often the case with the training in that you end up with people who just either want to stick an extra string to their bow and aren’t necessarily the ones you really want to get to engage with it or they’re the ones that haven’t yet developed. Because for me, I want them to have something to actually say. They need to be good at research before they get to the point where they’re good at the other stuff. And that’s part of the challenge sometimes with the early career researchers.”

“[We] are talking very much about how to roll out the training courses, and how to get senior researchers and principle investigators involved in doing public engagement with research more.”

Senior leadership buy-in at the departmental level

There was an understanding that senior leadership buy-in was essential to succeeding in PER and that although this had been established very successfully in some parts of the University, a lot more work needed to be done.

“So this point about these unengaged departments, what I think would be quite helpful for me would be to have an academic, more senior academics that can help open those doors, and have those conversations. But we don’t really have that, and again that’s another kind of thing that is quite high on my to-do list, for this academic year.”

“We need to make sure that it’s not isolated individuals, we need to make sure that is a departmentally-encouraged endeavor. And so that’s why I think it’s important to engage with departmental strategy groups, engage with heads of department.”

A need to share even more PER stories

Interviewees wanted to get better at sharing stories of excellent PER at the local level. In particular, they wanted researchers to become more aware of the value of the engagement
to their own research. It was suggested that hearing this would be a significant incentive to researchers and change the perception that it was a box-ticking exercise:

"[We've] got pockets of excellence but we’re not sharing them as effectively as we could and it’s on the list to do, dare I say?"

"I think those kinds of examples will start to creep out definitely. And they also give us really good examples to write up and share with people and get people involved in training sessions and stuff".

Impact and evaluation

Interviewees were aware that evaluating and being able to demonstrate impact was challenging. However, they were comfortable that this was an area for learning for the University and that processes would emerge and skills develop:

“The other point I don’t want to forget to say is I think the bit we are still struggling on is evaluation. How do we really show the value? So, you know, I can produce all sorts of anecdotes of, you know, little things I’ve learned or how I might do this a bit differently, or why I think this has been valuable but it’s quite difficult to put the whole experience of public engagement together in a way which will kind of evaluate ‘over and above bums on seats’ or, you know, ‘Mrs Blogs came and said she really liked it…’

“That’s the real challenge…

“… I think if we could learn more about evaluation. If we could really show the value of what we’re doing I think that would feedback and persuade another batch of people that maybe this really is worth spending time and money on.”

GLAM–PER

Curiosity Carnival was identified as making a considerable contribution to the profile of PER and GLAM as collaborators, and to the range and breadth of relationships researchers had with them:
“Curiosity Carnival] has enabled a much stronger interaction between colleagues in GLAM and researchers across the University. I mean it’s just been fantastic in that regard and so I think one of the outcomes of doing Curiosity Carnival is going to be much stronger relationship between, and more awareness of the potential relationships between GLAM and researchers in other departments.”

Reward and recognition

There was an acknowledgement that reward and recognition was important to establish more PER, over and above the VC PER Awards, with an interest in it being incorporated into promotion criteria:

"So funding is crucial, valuing the activity by having a prestige awards scheme is also really, really valuable. But I think there is work to be done..."

“... [including PER in promotion criteria is] not something that happens at the moment, and I think that would be a very useful way forward.”

5.4 Project-specific evaluations

We also conducted evaluations on specific projects and activities: The Conversation, PER Seed Fund; PER Seed Fund Evaluation workshops; PER into grants and impactful PER workshops and gathered metrics. The key metrics, outputs, outcomes and impacts revealed by these evaluations are provided in the Outputs, Outcomes, Impacts & Lessons Learnt matrix (see overleaf).
5.5 Outputs, Outcomes, Impacts & Lessons Learnt Matrix

**CSF Objectives**
1. Build capacity for research and support staff to develop and resource high-quality Public Engagement with Research activities.
2. Develop training and support to equip staff with the skills, tools and knowledge to better understand and gather evidence for public engagement as a route to research impact.
3. Promote Public Engagement with Research and demonstrate the University’s commitment to it.
4. Recognise and reward high-quality Public Engagement with Research activity.
5. Evaluate the outcomes and impact of the CSF programme.

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<th>Obj. no.</th>
<th>Rationale and Key activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcomes and Impacts/Legacy</th>
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|          | The PER training audit revealed that information about training provision was spread over many different University webpages and websites (i.e. that offered by the Divisions, Oxford Sparks, TORCH, IT Services etc).
|          | A new online PER training portal was created to sign-post staff and research students to the various PER and PER-related training courses available. | Information about the range of PER training courses available to students and staff is now sign-posted from one webpage within the University’s PER portal: www.ox.ac.uk/research/public-engagement/support-researchers (click on the Training tab).
|          | The page also includes a link to training by key external providers. | Increased coherence and awareness of the PER training available across the University and externally.  
Google analytics (1st Sept ’16 to 31 Aug ’17): 2,618 unique views and average time on page is 2.38 minutes demonstrating good use of these webpages and that people are reading and engaging with the content. | Ideally, the training portal would list all the up and coming PER training courses available (rather than ‘just’ sign-posting to other webpages) and be regularly updated.  
However – as training is offered by many different providers this would take ongoing staff resource to keep this page up-to-date which makes it unfeasible at present (resource-wise) |
An Introduction to Public Engagement with Research Training Course had previously been run for several years by and for MPLS/ MSD staff and students.

MPLS & MSD Public Engagement Facilitators agreed to offer this course, as a pilot, to all staff and DPhil students across all Divisions in 2016/17.

The aim was to explore developing a more coherent and coordinated plan for PER training at Oxford that reduces duplication; increases efficiency and reaches a broader range of researchers, rather than the current situation in which training was limited to those within specific Divisions.

4 x An Introduction to Public Engagement Training courses were delivered in 2016/17.

These 3-hour sessions were held in various locations across the University.

Brief description of the course:

“This session provides an introduction to public engagement for anyone interested in getting started or looking for a bit of inspiration. We look at what public engagement is and some of the reasons why you might want to do it. We’ll highlight the multitude of different approaches you can take, including real examples from the University and further afield. We’ll provide tips on getting started and where to get support. Researchers will present their experiences and answer your questions.”

52 DPhil students; researchers and research support staff took part this course in 2016-17.

Male: 17
Female: 32
Unknown: 3

MPLS: 24%
MSD: 45%
SSD: 10%
HUMS: 10%
Not stated or N/A: 11%

Average rating: 7.7/10

We found that those who attended the sessions from non-science divisions were less satisfied with the course, as evidenced through the drop in average satisfaction (last year’s average rating was 8.6).

Specific comments often included that more relevant examples from their disciplines and knowledge of specific methodologies or opportunities would have been more helpful. We therefore believe that a more targeted approach for the Divisions will be more effective in addressing these needs in the future.
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*The Conversation* provides opportunities for DPhil students, researchers and academics to engage public audiences with research through written online articles.

Oxford first became a member in 2015-16 and renewed its membership for 2016-17.

As evidenced from Oxford’s institutional metrics dashboard that is provided by *The Conversation*, for the 2016-17 academic year: 124 DPhil students, researchers and academics at Oxford published 150 articles on *The Conversation*.

The articles had a total readership of over 4 Million from the UK and further-a-field.

The readership includes those that access the articles directly via *The Conversation* website and all republished articles through their Creative Commons policy.

We conducted an evaluation of *The Conversation*, which included a survey of authors that published an article in the 2016-17 academic year:

90% of respondents stated that *The Conversation* is a valuable platform to engage the wider public.

In addition to engaging the public through their articles, 66% of survey respondents reported multiple additional outcomes and impacts including social media, press coverage including radio/TV interviews and being contacted by other researchers interested in their work.

Legacy: Research Services and the Academic Divisions have agreed to continue membership of *The Conversation*, which will be funded through the University’s HEIF allocation for 2017-18.

Our recommendations from the evaluation include:

- Focus our energies on encouraging more researchers to ‘pitch’ an article idea rather than responding to expert requests.

Work with/ encourage *The Conversation* to:

- Change the author policy so that the researcher that contributed most to the article is first author – rather than the most senior.

- Provide training and support re: how to deal with comments (in particular negative comments).

- Provide a way for institutions to have advanced notice re: articles authored by their researchers.

- Change the communications and key messages from ‘this is better’ than working with the media to this complements the work of University media and press offices.
|   | As a member of *The Conversation*, Oxford receives regular opportunities for researchers and academics to take part in hands-on training to enhance writing and engagement skills. Training is available to DPhil students, researchers and academics. Organised by the Divisions and delivered by editors of *The Conversation*, a second series of training opportunities was offered in 2016-17, ranging from introductory sessions and writing workshops to drop-in clinics and one-to-one sessions with Editors. | The evaluation demonstrated that 25 sessions were delivered by *The Conversation* editors during Sept 2015 to January 2017. For example:  - Editor-in-Residence days  - Lunchtime seminar: Introduction to Writing for The Conversation  - Workshop: Writing opinion pieces for a public audience.  - The Conversation: one-to-one drop-in sessions with the Editors.  - Workshop: writing opinion articles. | 216 DPhil students, researchers and academics attended (119 – MPLS/ MSD; 97 – SSD & HUMs).  The training sessions were very well-received.  "Brilliant platform, really well presented, the [editors] were great, very engaging, just perfect!"

There were a number of positive outcomes reported including:
- increased confidence in writing for public audiences
- increased motivation to engage the public
- increased understanding of how *The Conversation* ‘works’ re: pitching, writing, editing and publishing process.

"Motivated me and increased my confidence for writing articles for the public about my field of science."

Recommendations for training sessions (from *The Conversation* evaluation):
- Targeted: take a more targeted approach to training; either focused at the Departmental level or via research themes and topics.
- Evaluation: to enable us to compare feedback from the training, data collection across the different Divisional training courses needs to happen in a more systematic and homogeneous way.
- Content: it is clear that enough work has now been done re: general awareness raising of *The Conversation*, the focus should now be more strategic, targeted and in-depth to reach out to specific groups to encourage participation. |
|   |   | Seed funding was offered for researchers across all disciplines to develop, deliver and evaluate high-quality PER activities. The call for the second round of the University’s PER Seed Fund small grants scheme took place in Michaelmas Term (first term) 2016-17.

As part of the grant conditions, each PER Seed Fund awardee was required to take part in an evaluation workshop’ led by an external consultant.

Unsuccessful applicants were offered the opportunity for feedback by phone or face to face meeting.

|   |   | 31 applications were received. Applications were reviewed by 8 academic support staff members from different Divisions & departments; the applications and the reviews were sent to the Academic Funding Panel (5 academics: 1 from MPLS; SSD and HUMs and 2 from MSD).

2 x half-day workshops took place and were attended by one or two representatives from 9 of the PER Seed Fund projects (8 P.Is; 3 Co-Is) along with the members of the PER team. One PI could not attend and took part in a one-to-one evaluation session.

Eleven of the unsuccessful applicants took up the offer of feedback.

|   |   | 10 grants were awarded to PIs at all career levels and from different departments. Demonstrated that the University values PER by offering funding.

1 x film was made of Marcus du Sautoy’s PER Seed Fund project.

All the unsuccessful applicants appreciated the time and opportunity to discuss what could be improved and ideas for next steps.

The outputs, outcomes and impacts from these projects are many (see Case Study 2; Seed Fund project reports available on request).

An evaluation of the evaluation workshops (!) revealed that they were very well received.

Legacy: Funding to run the PER Seed Fund for 2017-18 has been secured from the University’s HEIF allocation.

The Academic panel provided their comments and recommendations by email for 2015-16 and 2016-17 PER Seed Funds. In future, we will have a ‘real’ (as opposed to virtual/online) PER Seed Fund panel meeting to make the funding decisions (as we do with the VC’s Awards).

Shared learning: the PER Seed Fund process (including marketing; decision-making process; communications about the funded projects; feedback; evaluation and final reporting) is being used as an example of best practice for other internal funding schemes such as the ISSF Seed Fund run by MSD, and the KE Seed Fund.

To run a PER Seed Fund ‘properly’ is a resource-intensive process; hence we make every effort to get the most value out of this scheme – which is much much more than the provision of financial support. |
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<td>One-to-one guidance and support was provided by the CSF PM; MSD PER Coordinator; and MPLS PER Facilitator to the 6 ‘new’ PIs for their applications to the £multi-Million Wellcome Centre grants programme (an existing centre also reapplyed) and to the PIs for the £multi-Million bid to the Wellcome’s Our Planet Our Health (OPOH) scheme. A number of meetings took place with each of the PIs and Co-Is, backed up with email support. Six ‘new’ proposals were submitted to the call for Wellcome Centres plus one renewal bid; and one proposal to the OPOH grant scheme. Each proposal had an integrated PER programme, as was required as a condition of this funding. Three <em>Wellcome Centres were awarded</em> in December 2016: Integrative Neuroimaging (Director: Heidi Johansen-Berg); Ethics, Innovation, Globalisation and Medicine (Director: Michael Parker); and renewal of the existing Centre: Human Genetics. The OPOH grant was awarded in March 2017; the CSF PM is a Co-I and has now taken on role as senior advisor for the PER programme. The research grant income totalled over £40M for the Centres and the OPOH bid, including over £1M ring-fenced funding for PER. Each of the projects has funds for a dedicated Public Engagement Coordinator/Officer, further building capacity for high-quality public engagement to take place at Oxford. Each of these major research grants is funded for 4 to 5 years. Being significantly involved in the OPOH grant as Co-I has been most beneficial for the CSF PM. This first-hand reminder of embedding public engagement into a research grant will be most beneficial in advising and empathising with PIs and PE facilitators as they go through this process. Without occasional returns to the ‘coal face’, there is a danger that a PER Facilitator’s role can become too high-level and strategic and forget the practical realities and challenges of building high-quality PE into research projects. The ‘right’ way to support PIs to develop a PE programme into their research projects is a question that is worthy of further exploration. For the CSF PM and OPOH bid – this was a critical balancing act of listening to the PIs’ PER ambitions together with providing direction and guidance to shape their plans while aiming to ensure that the resulting PER programme was still be ‘owned’ (and felt to be owned) by the research leaders.</td>
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*See also: the ‘story of change’ with Professor Susan Jebb, one of the PIs of the OPOH bid – the project is now called Livestock, Environment And People (LEAP).*
We conducted a scoping study to better understand ways in which we can facilitate more GLAM-PER partnership projects with departments and researchers at Oxford.

The six GLAM (Gardens, Libraries & Museums) are as follows:

Botanic Gardens & Harcourt Arboretum
Ashmolean museum
Museum of History of Science
Museum of Natural History
Pitt-Rivers Museum
Bodleian Library

7 x interviews conducted with: each of the 6 GLAM directors; 1 x Head of PER and 1 x Deputy Director.

6 x focus groups were conducted with staff from each of the GLAM departments. A total of 53 staff took part.

6 x individual reports were created for each GLAM department.

One overall final report was produced for GLAM as a whole with recommendations to foster more fruitful PER-GLAM partnerships with researchers.

One half-day workshop was delivered. Chaired by the Academic Champion; facilitated by the CSF PM; 26 colleagues in attendance including the GLAM Pro-VC, Directors and senior staff and PER AG.

PER and GLAM colleagues reported that they found this scoping review very useful: providing time for reflection and to provide direction for next steps that will build capacity for more GLAM-PER collaborations to take place.

At the workshop, we prioritised key actions that would be taken forward by GLAM and PER AG and each GLAM department agreed one or two key actions to take forward within their own department.

Sustainability: At the request of the Pro-VC for GLAM, Directors and other senior staff, we have plans in place to conduct a second workshop in the 2017/18 academic year to review progress on the actions and make further plans.

See also the 'Story of Change' interview with the Pro-VC for GLAM.

Taking the time to build good relationships with colleagues before embarking on important culture-change projects is key. Only once a trusted relationship has been built will colleagues feel comfortable in sharing both their successes but also the areas for improvement and the barriers and challenges they face.
**Curiosity Carnival** – Oxford’s European Researchers’ Night.

Development and delivery of **Curiosity Carnival**, the CSF Project Manager was the PI and Senior Project Manager for this University-wide PER programme; working in partnership with many others from across the University, partners and associates, to develop and deliver this joint large-scale event.

This event aimed to significantly raise the profile of public engagement with research across the University; enable over 200 academics, researchers and DPhils across all disciplines to take part; reach 10,000 people on the Night; 250,000 via online and media engagement and a reach of 1 million; build capacity of high-quality PER to take place; demonstrate buy-in to public engagement from across the University, including at high-level.

**Curiosity Carnival** was Oxford’s largest PER event to date and took place on 29 September in the GLAM venues, Wytham Woods and in the city centre. The outputs are large in number, and some examples are below:

- **a)** A total of 151 researcher-led activities of which 100+ were new including bite-sized talks; interactive activities; live experiments; performances; research-busking and much more!

- **b)** Every lead researcher was offered training, support and guidance through group workshops and one-to-one meetings and surgeries.

- **c)** Significant internal and external communications and engagement campaign with many different outputs (website; brochures; radio adverts; animations; posters; flyers; social media) and activities; 3 x ‘mini-Curiosity Carnival’ events in hard-to-reach communities; *I’m a Researcher Get me Out of Here*

Over 500 researchers, DPhil students and academics participated and developed activities and resources that can be used in the future; gained PER skills and experience and built new contacts and relationships with PER staff across from the Divisions and GLAM.

Significant high-profile PER activity that reached thousands of staff across the University; championed by the VC and Pro-VCs.

9,400 people attended the event; 29,000 engaged with the activities on the night via Facebook live; 262,000 engaged online; and the communications campaign had a potential reach of 45 million.

Visitor survey: 89% reported a good to excellent experience (56% rated it as excellent); 83% learnt about research; 89% enjoyed meeting researchers face-to-face.

Raised awareness of the

**Key learning to share with others:**

While there are many benefits to working on large-scale joint event with the multiple internal stakeholders and delivery partners and in theory ‘many hands make light work’ – do not underestimate the HUGE resource that is required for coordination and management (especially in large, devolved and complex institutions!).

‘Hard-to-Reach’ audiences are hard to reach! Start building relations months before the event itself to encourage attendance.

Think about how you can develop evaluation methodologies/impact assessment techniques that are in keeping with the ‘spirit’ of your project. For **Curiosity Carnival** – many of the techniques aimed to have a fun, interactive or engaging element to them.

Oxfordshire Science Festival (OSF), which is undergoing a

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activity; Oxford Sparks animation.

d) Presentations at the University's Council; University Research Committee; RISN; Comms Network; 1 x Curiosity Carnival "Get Engaged @ Lunchtime" event for key staff to find out about the event and how to get involved (40 in attendance); 1 x "Curious about the Carnival" event took place at the UAS conference; 1 VIP event.

e) 1 min film; 2 min film; Storify and photo gallery of Curiosity Carnival.

f) Management & Coordination: 8 ERN Oversight Committee meetings; over 20 Working Group meetings; and 10 Core Coordinators Group meetings and hundreds of smaller meetings (1-to-1s and small groups).

g) Reports: Periodic reports (x2); technical reports (x2); deliverables reports (x8); evaluation reports (x3); impact assessments (x2).

importance of quality in PER - not only the activities and resources produced but also the importance of focusing on the 'quality' of the engagement experiences between researchers and the public visitors – rather than just the numbers of people engaged.

Built strong relationships between central and Divisional PER facilitators, GLAM colleagues; and researchers which should lead to benefits in the future re: PER activities that take place across/within GLAM.

An action plan is under development to encourage each participating researcher to take another step in their PER journey during 2017-18.

A booklet of evaluation and impact-assessment mini case-studies showcasing the pros and cons of particular tools and mechanisms used for Curiosity Carnival will be produced to provide inspiration and improve evaluation practice.

period of change with, with a new vision for a different kind of festival to take place in October 2018. The CSF PM is a Trustee of OSF and will be sharing many of the Curiosity Carnival lessons learnt with the OSF team; the OSF team also attended Curiosity Carnival and gained many ideas for further creative and innovative programming and of researchers and activities they would potentially invite to be part of the future festival.
The aim was to better support academics, researchers and public engagement/research/impact facilitators and other staff, in:
- planning and building high-quality public engagement activities into research grant proposals.
- better understanding public engagement as a route to research impact and how to evidence it.

Process (supported by a PER consultant):
Desk research to explore the resources already publically available.
Interviews with staff from across the University to explore what support/guidance is required.
Developed new resources and training modules that were piloted on different target audiences.

A draft tool kit has been produced with existing and new resources re: PE into grants and as a Route to Impact including:
- Guidance on including PER as part of Research Councils Pathways to Impact
- An indicative PER costings list
- A template for planning impactful PER
- A final checklist re: what to include in your grant application
- A set of slides for 2 x training courses

4 x pilot training courses were developed and delivered: 1 x PER grants and 1 x PER impact for academics (20 attended in total); 1 x PER grants for support staff (14 attended) 1 x PER grant & impact for GLAM (15 attended).

An evaluation of the pilot courses was undertaken and a short final report produced.

Feedback from course attendees:
- academics & support staff found details on how to plan impactful PER useful; some GLAM staff felt that they were familiar with this methodology already
- academics wanted more specific advice on exactly what to include re: PER in grants
- support staff in particular found the checklist resources very useful
- More specifics were wanted on PER impact for the REF – rather than ‘impactful PER’ more generally
- While attendees found hearing from others from different disciplines very interesting they would prefer discipline-specific workshops so that all the working examples were relevant.

GLAM colleagues wanted more support regarding working with researchers.

Changes have been made to the supporting materials and training course plans; and will continue to evolve and improve as the resources are used and more workshops are delivered.

Research Services, the Divisions and GLAM are now offering one-to-one surgeries to support PIs and Research Facilitators in building high-quality, well-resourced PER into grant applications.

We are also piloting discipline-specific "Introduction to evaluating PER" workshops in the 2017-18 academic year.

Key learning: While utilising the resources and expertise of an external consultant can be of great benefit; sometimes a project can only go so far and from then on - it’s more effective for them to be delivered by the in-house team as a deep understanding of institutional culture, practice and need is required.
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<tr>
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<th>2</th>
<th><strong>Aim:</strong> to ensure that PER is viewed as an important component of the REF and a valuable route to REF impact.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PER staff attended the NCCPE – PER &amp; the REF workshop in July 2017.</td>
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<td>1 x full PER &amp; the REF discussion paper was developed by PER AG and sent to the University’s REF Project Board; it was also shared with the attendees of the NCCPE PER and the REF workshop.</td>
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<td>1 x response produced by PERAG for Q23 of the consultation (that focused specifically on PER).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Review and analysis of Oxford’s REF 2014 impact case studies that include PER.</td>
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<td>Ensured the University’s REF Project Board discussed PER during their discussions re: the University’s response.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Helped the NCCPE continue the conversation re: PER and the REF with the workshop delegates; and to raise awareness that Oxford was taking PER seriously.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Oxford’s submission to the HEFCE consultation included a comprehensive response to Q23.</td>
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<td>The REF 2014 PER impact case study review has highlighted useful examples that can be used in the future and demonstrates that PER is a valid and valuable route to REF impact across all disciplines at Oxford. It also provides a baseline for REF 2021.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Legacy: there will be future work taking place with the aim that Oxford and its researchers consider PER to be a valuable route to research impact, including that for the REF.</td>
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<td>Developing a PER discussion paper for the REF project Board was a good way to “warm-up” the Board and bring PER to the members attention at an early stage in their discussions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The PER staff that attended the NCCPE REF–PER workshop found that listening to the views and insights of others from many different HEIs was really beneficial in developing our own thinking.</td>
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<td>Aim: to raise awareness of PER best practice; provide inspiration for others; and demonstrate the benefits of PER to researchers in their own words.</td>
<td>We aimed to produce one filmed case study but in the end were able to produce two as we used the internal filming service rather than an external film-maker which enabled cost savings.</td>
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| Production of filmed case studies – storyboarding; filming of the activities and interviews with researchers and public participants/audiences; editing and production. | Two 4 minute films produced:
Professor Marcus du Sautoy’s *Symmetry of Sound*

Professor Karen Leeder’s *Mediating Modern German Poetry* |
| Communications activities to raise awareness of the films included use of the University’s channels, which have significant reach: |
| Posted on the University’s ox.ac.uk homepage; Facebook page (3,376,809 followers) and Twitter account (394,000 followers). |
| Also shared the films through other Divisional and Departmental communication channels and networks. |
| *Symmetry of Sound* went live in September 2017: total views - 7841 views (1721 views from YouTube; 6124 via Facebook) (figures taken on 14-11-17); |
| *Mediating Modern German Poetry* went live in October 2017: total views - 6399 (YouTube: 420 views; Facebook: 5979 views) |
| Legacy: we plan to continue to produce best practice filmed case studies – at least one per year. |
| We now have three in the series featuring research across the social sciences (*Good Germs; Bad Germs* produced with support from CSF 2015-17); sciences (*Symmetry of Sound*) and humanities (*Mediating Modern German Poetry*). |
| The 2017-18 academic year will focus on producing two more PER best practice case study films from the Medical Sciences and GLAM in 2017-18 which will be funded by ISSF. | Key learning:
Properly thinking about the key messages we wanted to get across in each film *before* selecting which academics/projects to profile was really beneficial; this also enabled us to check with the academics that they were happy to raise these key messages – before agreeing to produce the film. |
<p>| 3 | 3 | Aim: to raise awareness of the University’s PER Strategic Plan and demonstrate the University’s commitment to this activity. Activity: We developed and delivered an event to publically launch the plan; and to raise awareness of <em>Curiosity Carnival.</em> | The <a href="#">PER Strategic plan</a> was professionally designed and printed (x 500 copies) and published it online as a PDF. 1 x after-work drinks and reception in the University’s Pitt-Rivers museum. 3 x speeches from senior staff: Professor Sarah Whatmore, Academic Champion for Public Engagement with Research and Pro-VC for Education. Professor Ian Walmsley, Pro-VC (R &amp; I) Dr Laura van Broekhoven, Director, Pitt–Rivers Museum | 71 staff (including Heads of Department; PER-active academics; VC PER Awards winners; PER Seed Fund awardees) attended together with 6 externals (from Wellcome; Research Councils; Fellow CSF Cambridge Project Lead and Science Oxford). Raised awareness of the PER Strategic plan and <em>Curiosity Carnival: Oxford’s European Researchers’ Night.</em> Over 400 copies of the Strategic Plan disseminated; downloaded 695 times (470 unique downloads). Demonstrated senior level buy-in to PER. Enabled externals to view Oxford’s vision and action plans. Legacy: the strategic plan has a 10 year vision for PER at Oxford and a 3 year implementation plan. | Reflections: Although an internal document – we felt it was important to launch and make the Strategic Plan publically available to demonstrate Oxford’s commitment to PER and to share our approach to inspire and inform others for their PER strategic plans. |</p>
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| **Aim:** To raise the profile of PER internally and externally.  

Activities:  

We shared PER news, opportunities, support; guidance and case studies via a variety of online and printed communications channels – both internal and external.  

PER news, articles and features in internal and external printed and online publications:  

University’s website ox.ac.uk including the homepage; *Curiosity Carnival* and [PER webpages](#) which are also sign-posted from the homepage of the new [Research Admin](#) site.  

University’s social media: posted news on the PER Strategy; the new PER Academic Champion; VC PER Awards and *Curiosity Carnival* via Twitter; Facebook and Linked-in.  

2 x 2-page features in [Blueprint](#) magazine; 3 articles in Oxford’s [Annual Review](#); a chapter in the University of Oxford’s publication ‘In Brief’.  

2 x 1-page colour features in the Oxford Mail re: *Curiosity Carnival* and the [VC PER Awards](#); and other smaller articles.  

Many news items in Divisional, Departmental and College newsletters and webpages.  

Raised awareness of PER; PER activities and programmes; PER best practice; PER opportunities, support and guidance and of Oxford’s commitment to PER.  

PER webpages 2016/17: 20,506 unique page views; average 2.5 minutes time on page. 1534 unique downloads of the resources (eg PER Strategic Plan; PER Seed Fund Awardees; PER in grants guidance).  

Blueprint print and electronic subscribers: 5830  

Oxford Mail circulation: 9922  

Annual Review: 5000 print run.  

In Brief: 5000 print run.  

Internal newsletters and websites reach: at least 4000+ internal staff and research students.  

Legacy: our work will continue to raise the profile of PER at Oxford through a variety of communication channels.  

Key learning:  

There is always competition for ‘column inches’ in internal and external publications, media outlets and websites.  

As such, having engaging high-resolution colourful photos taken by a professional photographer can increase the chance of attracting the interest of internal communications teams and the external media to the PER stories that you would like to have featured.
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We developed and delivered the second VC PER Awards to recognise and reward PER at the institutional level.

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<td>Updated online entry form and guidance notes produced.</td>
<td>14 Award Winners and 9 Highly-Commended; 1 x VC’s winner.</td>
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<td>1 x review panel meeting (12 in attendance) and 1 x academic judging panel meeting (10 in attendance).</td>
<td>1 x booklet of Award winners (400+ hard-copies disseminated; also available online).</td>
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<td>A5 Flyers and A3 posters designed, printed and distributed across departments and colleges to encourage entries including a 4 x A0 poster display in University Offices: a key area of footfall for staff inc. Pro-VCs.</td>
<td>14 x 1-minute films of the Award winners – available here.</td>
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<td>Other communications include announcements and articles in newsletters; websites; key mailing lists and social media.</td>
<td>Feedback from awardees and ceremony attendees was extremely positive, including from the VC.</td>
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<td>51 entries received.</td>
<td>1 x ceremony film about the film; 1 x full-page colour article in the Oxford Mail plus many other communications outputs, for example –Twitter: Storify of tweets is <a href="#">here</a>.</td>
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<td>1 x Awards ceremony with 154 in attendance mostly internal and some key external colleagues.</td>
<td>Demonstrated that Oxford values PER.</td>
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<td>Comms packs: produced for each award winning project and sent to relevant comms staff.</td>
<td>Raised the profile of the diversity of PER at Oxford, across all PER purposes and disciplines.</td>
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<td>Raised awareness of what high-quality PER ‘looks like’.</td>
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Lesson learnt: When we informed the entrants via email that they had been awarded a VC PER Award, we also copied in their in-line manager; Head of Department; Master of College and relevant communications colleagues (eg Divisional/Departmental/College Comms staff). This had surprising good outcomes: awardees received attention directly from their Heads of Department/College, many of whom were not aware of their work in PER; the comms staff felt ‘in the loop’ and when provided with the ‘Comms pack’ for the award winning project – were very proactive in helping to raise awareness.
6.0 Sustainability plans

6.1 Resources

- The strategic PER activities that have been developed and funded via CSF are financially supported by other sources for 2017/18: 81K – HEIF and £15K – ISSF (total – £96k).

- The £96K is providing support for the PER Seed Fund; PER Conference (from now on – we intend to run the VC PER Awards every two years, alternating with the PER Conference); Evaluation consultancy; Training and part-time PER administration support.

- The proposals for the University’s HEIF grant for 2018/19 and 2019/20 are currently under development, including a bid for PER; Oxford’s ISSF grant (which includes provision for PER) is funded for 5 years.

- The Academic Champion for PER is a two-year position, with the option to extend and we expect this role to continue for many years to come.

- The Head of PER, Research Services was initially funded by the Divisions on a three-year fixed-term contract, and is now an established core-funded position.

- The three Wellcome Centres and the Our Planet Our Health grant-funded projects are major research programmes with integral and resourced PER programmes embedded with dedicated PER staff and will take place until 2021/2022.

- The grant-funded projects that have been secured as a result of, or were influenced by the PER Seed Funded projects, will continue for 1 to 4 years, each of which have public and/or community engagement embedded within.

6.2 Policy & Practice

- The PER Strategic Plan has a 10 year vision (2016 – 2026) with a three year implementation plan, the latter will be updated in 2019.

- The Terms of Reference for the Pro VC (Research & Innovation) and the University’s Research Committee have been changed to incorporate PER. We will continue to present at least one major item to the University’s Research Committee per year.

- CSF has influenced PER service provision and changed PER practice at Oxford and the effects of this will continue into the future.

- The annual MPLS Impact Awards now have a ‘PER’ Category; and the IT Services annual ‘OxTalent’ Awards (celebrating digital engagement at Oxford) have changed their Public Engagement Category closer to ‘PER’ and have shaped their selection criteria accordingly.
● The PER Advisory Group and PER Academic Advisory meetings will continue to meet on a termly basis (twice-a-term and once-a-term, respectively).

● Changes to X5 – the University’s grant costing tool re: the question “Have you applied for funds to do public engagement with research?” is now part of the system.

6.3 Networks & Relationships

● Networks and relationships that developed due to CSF will continue past the period of funding and have already resulted in the initiation of new projects, and we expect will lead to many more fruitful PER collaborations in the future.

● The PER team have built good relationships with OSF – the Oxfordshire Science Festival (an externally-run activity) and we are working closely with the OSF on their vision for a new festival ‘IF’ and how this can help build capacity for PER at Oxford.

6.4 Building Capacity

● We have built capacity for higher-quality PER to take place in the future through training courses, workshops and seminars and will continue to provide a PER training programme.

● We have funded the development of new PER activities and resources, via the PER Seed Fund and Curiosity Carnival, many of which we expect will be used for several years to come.

● PER is becoming one of priorities for GLAM and work on fostering more GLAM-PER collaborations will continue.

6.5 Conceptual

● As demonstrated by the survey, there has been improvements in staff’s understanding of PER; and through many other activities, we have increased understanding of what high-quality PER ‘looks like’.

● There is also changing understanding with respect to public engagement as a route to research impact – it’s value and validity and we aim for PER to take a more prominent in the up and coming REF at Oxford.

6.6 Communications

● The Public Affairs Directorate (PAD) now include PER in their content via the University’s key communication channels and we expect this to continue.

● The PER webpages will continue to be maintained and updated; we will continue to develop new resources and PER best practice case study films.
7.0 Case Studies

7.1 Mathematics, Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS) Division: A PER Journey.

Author: Dr Michaela Livingstone-Banks, Public Engagement with Research Facilitator, MPLS

“Are you sitting comfortably? Then I’ll begin. Let me go back to where we were this time a few years ago, before the Catalyst Seed Fund......

The Divisional office was active in many senses when it came to public engagement with research (PER). It was explicitly referred to in our divisional strategy and we had a couple of ‘solutions’ to facilitate public engagement.

But... was that everything we could be doing? Did we have a sense of the breadth of work we could be doing to embed public engagement in the activities of the division? And what was it for anyway?

The benefits from CSF really started with conversations about it – people were talking about PER together in a very focused way that wasn’t just about activity but very much on the culture of public engagement across the University. It essentially put PER on the agenda. Another important change was the appointment of the now Head of PER, which really enabled the CSF work to be done meaningfully.

The formation of the Public Engagement with Research Advisory Panel was not only a way of feeding into wider work, but a great opportunity to share and learn with other Divisions. Specific projects, e.g., the audit of PER and PER-related training, have helped us to focus what we do, and make sure we have shared language and messages.

From here the development of the public engagement strategic plan and the conversations that took place to inform it started shining light on the multi-faceted world of public engagement, raising awareness with people beyond PER staff and interested researchers. It also gave us the opportunity to explore and ultimately decide what PER meant to Oxford. The plan found a space to create the right agenda that resonated.
Lesley, Head of PER, facilitated an EDGE analysis with us for our Division, which provided a baseline of where we were, and an idea of the tangible activities that could really make a difference; it set out some of the stepping stones along our journey and prompted us to reflect on where we wanted to get to.

The PER Seed Fund, and especially the VCs PER Awards have both raised the profile of PER and helped communicate and show what excellent public engagement can look like. A lot of people reported that they not only raised awareness of PER but also demonstrated a commitment to PER by the University that wasn’t evident before. They also highlighted some activities in MPLS that we weren’t aware of.

In the meantime, the Division had a change in senior leadership with Professor Donal Bradley taking over as Head of Division. From the beginning, public engagement was cited as one of his top three strategic priorities for the Division. Conversations about what we could do more broadly to support public engagement accelerated and were greeted with enthusiasm, and were granted space within the core business of the Division.

Having made the argument about the importance of developing the culture for PER, as demonstrated by the benefits seen by work at a University-wide level, I was able to carve out extra time dedicated to exactly this.

Recently, it feels like the momentum from various activities has combined to help us achieve ‘escape velocity’, where there’s been three significant ‘firsts’ in quick succession:

- The Division’s very first academic champion for public engagement with research, the volcanologist Professor David Pyle, was appointed this October (see left).
- For the first time in its five year history, the Division’s impact awards now have a category for public engagement with research.
- Public Engagement is now ‘owned’ by a committee – people are paying attention and it’s now part of the agenda.

Others tell us that we’re moving forward with a sense of purpose, whilst acknowledging existing good practice and strengths.

But we still have some way to go. In developing our strategy in MPLS, we have to take account of our particular context, where we don’t need to redefine public engagement with research relative to the University-wide definition, but we do need to acknowledge and clearly explain the relationships between PER and the wider outreach and widening
participation work that many of our departments are heavily invested in, and where much of the resource lies.

We also need to work on supporting and communicating with departments. We have a strong core of keen supporters of PER, but we can’t invent a time machine* to respond to the still common response when asked about barriers to doing PER: lack of time.

Our developing Divisional PE strategy is focusing on ensuring we find the best ways of working with and across departments, on adding value to what they already do, communicating the benefits of PER, supporting effective evaluation, and sharing case studies – all with the goal of increasing the value placed on PER and its recognition, so that we might start to move things to a place where we won’t need to generate ‘extra’ time.

The path hasn’t always been easy, or even obvious, but it’s hard to imagine how we would have made the progress we have made were it not against the backdrop of the excellent work being done as part of CSF. We wouldn’t have been able to achieve this on our own, especially in the space of two short, busy years.

*I have asked some of our physicists. They say it’s not possible.

7.2. Public Engagement with Research Seed Fund

The PER Seed fund that was funded and delivered as part of CSF 2015–16 demonstrated that small grants can make a big difference to researchers being able to get started in public engagement; provide those with experience to pilot new ideas or enhance existing projects and build skills and leverage additional funds.

*Figure 7: Posters produced by school pupils who took part in one of the Whopping Cough workshops funded by the PER Seed Fund 2016-17*
However it was apparent from the final project reports in 2015–16 that there needed to be a bigger emphasis on evaluation. For 2016–17, as a condition of the funding, every Awardee was required (as part of the grant conditions) to attend an evaluation workshop at the beginning of their project. Perhaps surprisingly – this was seen as an extra carrot rather than a stick. The evaluation workshops were enthusiastically viewed by almost all Seed Fund PIs as a great opportunity.

“We found the workshop on evaluation of projects extremely helpful, and significantly changed how we approached reviewing the impact [of our Project]. It encouraged us to think about using multiple forms of evaluation to compliment the sort of data you can gain, and also about what each question or evaluation was aimed at improving.” PER Seed Fund PI

Unsuccessful applicants from the 2015–16 PER Seed Fund were given written feedback on their application; however it was apparent that more needed to be done to avoid dampening or extinguishing their enthusiasm for PER (especially in the case of those new to PER) or in the work of the central PER team at Oxford.

As such, this year the CSF PM offered feedback sessions by phone or face-to-face for every unsuccessful applicant. The objectives were to provide bespoke feedback on both the proposal’s strengths and areas that needed development/ more thinking; to help build rapport and highlight other opportunities that the applicants may be interested in pursuing (including funding opportunities); and encourage them to continue their PER journey. Each session was very well received.

**PER Seed Fund 2016-17: Outputs and Outcomes**

31 applications from 28 different departments across 4 Academic Divisions and good gender balance re: PIs (17 males; 14 females).

10 awards made to PIs at different career levels: DPhil students, early to mid-career researchers and senior academics from 10 different departments across the sciences, humanities and social sciences.

2 evaluation group workshops and 1 one-to-one evaluation session

11 feedback sessions took place for unsuccessful applicants

1 case study film of a PER Seed Funded project (Prof. M. du Sautoy)
Each 2016-17 PER Seed Fund awardee was required to evaluate their project and complete a final project report - this enabled us to gather information on the outputs, outcomes and impacts of all the projects:

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**Outputs. Outcomes & Impacts of the 16/17 PER Seed Fund projects inc.:**

- Diverse range of different publics engaged including: Burmese migrants; school pupils; theatre goers; festival goers; residents of East Oxford; Patient; Venetians.

- Over 1000 people engaged face-to-face and over 17k online.

- Public benefits included: increased awareness; enjoyment; empowerment and enabling voices and opinions to be heard; greater involvement in setting research priorities; social interactions.

- Research/researcher benefits include: improved PER activities and engagement practice; led to a successful fellowship proposal; gained insight on public views; informed future work and new research ideas; increased understanding of evaluation.

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We also followed-up with the PER Seed Fund Awardees from the first CSF year in 2015-16 – to explore if any other benefits had arisen over time due to their Seed Fund grant.

The most outstanding legacy was that 5 of the 8 Project Leads that responded (from a total of 10) noted that either they and/or the researchers participating in the project had received significant new research grant funding that also had community or public engagement embedded within – and stated that these were was a direct result or influenced by the initial PER Seed Fund project. This paves the way for many more publics to be engaged but also for future high-quality PER that was developed at the time of application and hence is embedded firmly within the research process:

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1 x Leverhulme research fellowship for a project that involves a large panel of 200 refugees; 3 x Knowledge Exchange Fellowships; 2 x grant applications to Global Challenges Research Fund to continue developing the project including further engagement with communities; 1 x Impact Acceleration Project.

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Oxford's PER Seed Fund will continue for 2017-18 via support from the University's HEIF allocation.
7.3 GLAM–PER

**Background and context**

The University’s Gardens, Libraries And Museums (GLAM) attract more than 3 million public visitors a year and have many staff with public engagement skills and expertise. Hence the benefits of researchers working with GLAM staff are clear to see. Researchers also have access to funding sources for PER through research grants that are not accessible to public engagement staff in GLAM – so the benefit is mutual. Furthermore, with only a very small team of central/Divisional PER facilitators, we need to leverage more staff support from across the University to work with Oxford’s thousands of DPhil students, researchers and academics on their PER activities if we are to see a change in culture.

The PER team together with GLAM colleagues conducted a scoping study to better understand ways in which we can facilitate more GLAM–PER partnership projects with departments and researchers at Oxford. We employed the services of a public engagement consultant to work with us on designing and delivering this scoping study.

*Figure 8: Oxford University Museum of Natural History on Curiosity Carnival Night.*

**The process**

Six 1-hour interviews were conducted with each of the GLAM Directors (one interview took place alongside a Head of Public Engagement) and one additional interview with a GLAM Deputy Director. Each Director was asked to provide a list of key staff – the
movers, shakers and influencers in each GLAM department that would be invited to a one-off working group session.

Six half-day working group sessions were conducted with staff from each of the 6 GLAM departments, with between 3 and 14 staff attending (depending on the size of the department). Each session explored current GLAM-PER activity in that department; what worked; the challenges and barriers; and discussed actions that could be taken forward.

One final half-day workshop was organised and delivered to discuss the findings, recommendations and future actions as a group. Hosted by the Academic Champion for PER and facilitated by the CSF PM, 26 colleagues were in attendance including the GLAM Pro-VC; GLAM Directors and senior staff; and members of PER AG. The consultant, Dr Steve Cross, was also in attendance.

![Figure 9. The Botanic Garden team at the GLAM-PER workshop.]

**Outputs and outcomes**

Six individual reports were created for each GLAM department that summarised the findings of the interviews and working groups specific to that department, together with suggested recommendations to foster more PER partnership projects with researchers.

One overall final report was produced for GLAM as a whole, also with recommendations.

PER and GLAM colleagues reported that they found the scoping project to be an extremely valuable exercise that significantly increased understanding regarding the enablers and barriers and to provide direction for future plans.

At the workshop, we prioritised a number of key actions that would be taken forward by GLAM as a whole in the next 6 months to 12 months; and each GLAM department agreed to one or two key actions to take forward within their own department.

At the request of the Pro-VC for GLAM, Professor Anne Trefethen, we are conducting a second workshop in the 2017/18 academic year to review progress make further plans.

**Key Learning**

While it was tempting at the start of the 2016–17 academic year to just ‘get cracking’ on trying to broker and make more GLAM-PER partnerships with researchers happen, on reflection, taking the time to properly scope and understand the barriers and enablers was certainly the right decision.
We now feel we have an excellent knowledge base on which to build a GLAM culture in which even more PER partnerships with researchers and departments can flourish; and have built even closer relationships between PER and GLAM colleagues.

Taking the time to build good relationships with colleagues before embarking on important culture-change projects is paramount. Only once a trusted relationship has been built will everyone feel comfortable in sharing both their PER successes but also the areas for improvement and the barriers and challenges they face. Hence it was right that we undertook this scoping exercise in the second year of CSF following the building of relationships with GLAM colleagues during the first year of CSF; and that it was carried out in partnership with GLAM rather than something that was ‘done to GLAM’ by the PER team.

Also utilising a consultant for this project was particularly valuable due to their expertise and knowledge of University museums and PER; and it’s sometimes ‘easier’ for a consultant to be a critical friend than it is an internal staff member.

Fostering PER-GLAM relationships - outcomes and impacts include:

The Wellcome-funded Our Planet Our Health project (for which the CSF PM is a Co-investigator) includes funding (£75k) for a small but high-quality interactive exhibition at the Museum of Natural History in 2020 to be developed in partnership with the research team. The Wellcome-funded Centre for Neuroimaging grant also includes funding for partnership activities with the Ashmolean museum.

Curiosity Carnival – Oxford’s biggest PER event to date, was a huge GLAM-PER partnership project.


The Museum of Natural History and Oxford Neuroscience developed and delivered the Brain Diaries exhibition, which has been running since March 2017 and won a VC PER Award in 2017, as did the Museum of History of Science with their partnership with the Oxford Martin School for their exhibition on anti-microbial resistance.

The Ashmolean museum is creating its first gallery specifically focused on Public Engagement with Research in 2018.

The Botanic Garden recruited their first Head of Science and Public Engagement in 2016/17.

The Bodleian Libraries now has a Public Engagement (PE) Strategy and PE Committee.

MPLS Division are scoping a new project to support GLAM-researcher PER projects.
8.0 Stories of Change
These interviews were conducted and edited by the external evaluation consultants and signed off by the interviewees.

8.1 Professor Anne Trefethen

Anne is Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Resources and Information Systems, and oversees the Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM).

Anne talks about the role of the GLAM institutions in supporting researchers with PER, and how the Catalyst Seed Fund has influenced this.

“I think that framework of having an academic leadership that is more than a figurehead and is really engaging and talking to academics, and then having someone who is actually driving the agenda, making sure the right governance structures are in place to deliver, making sure the right people are in place has been very effective.”

How has the CSF influenced the role of GLAM with PER?

In terms of the GLAM institutions, we have become more confident let’s say, about our actual role and our potential role in PER. There’s been a lot of work around training and the GLAM institutions have benefitted from that as well, and the VC’s Awards has made a big difference to people, it’s really raised the profile and got more people engaged and talking about it. The current PER activities have enabled a much stronger interaction between colleagues in GLAM and researchers across the University. I think Curiosity Carnival is going be to be incredibly helpful in making connections into what can be done and where. We have had a bit of a road map and we had a review done as part of the CSF activity and there was a lot of really good things that came out of that. We’re looking to embed PER in the GLAM Divisional office and developing a clear strategy around it. I would say we have more of an idea what we’ve got to do and we’re doing that but there’s still more to do.

Are there any challenges you’d identify looking towards the future?

I think a challenge for us in the museums is getting the resource level and in the right place at the right time and why I say that is PER requires a different set of skills at different times. So right at the beginning you need not only an understanding of the research but somebody who can help write proposals, then the actual PER activity and then you need the assessment and evaluation elements in there. So I think we’ve got some work to do to make sure we can embed that skill set in our organisation that is needed to support
researchers and PER through its whole life cycle. It’s challenging because there are teeny bits of money around to help do this but they’re usually a couple of hours a week. I think there’s less of a challenge now in terms of engaging with researchers and that is an indication of how far PER has moved.

Is there anything else you’d like to mention in particular?

I think that framework of having an academic leadership that is more than a figurehead and is really engaging and talking to academics, and then having someone who is actually driving the agenda, making sure the right governance structures are in place to deliver, making sure the right people are in place has been very effective. If you look at where we were two years ago and where we are now, I think we have moved immeasurably and a lot of that is due to this position and the activities have been put in place.

In summary: the combined activities funded by the CSF are thought to be “a huge force for change” and that the university has “moved immeasurably” from where it was two years ago. Specifically for the GLAM Division, positive effects have been described both from direct input, such as the conducting of a review and identifying the current and potential role of GLAM with PER, and indirectly, such as the building of relationships through events and other activities.

8.2 Professor Alison Woollard

Alison is the Academic Champion for PER at the University.

Alison describes the Catalyst Seed Funds and the VC PER awards as two main activities that demonstrate the University’s commitment to and valuing of PER. She also highlights the importance of public engagement professional services staff and some areas for further progression.

“Oxford is on a very important, very distinctive journey. That’s because there has been a lot of institutional support, and University senior leaders have really woken up to the importance of this area.”

How do you think PER is viewed across the University?

I think Oxford is on a very important, very distinctive journey. That’s because there has been a lot of institutional support, and University senior leaders have really woken up to the importance of this area. So having Lesley as our overall coordinator has been really crucial.
You can tell what people think of PER has changed, because when you have events they are very well attended and people are quite excited about doing more public engagement. The gardens, libraries and museums are very interested in getting involved and they can see the University moving in this direction. That’s very palpable and I think the two things that have really cemented this desire to develop in this area are the seed fund grant and the VC Awards, which have attracted amazing applications. People see that this is something worth doing.

**Do you think your role as academic champion for PER has had an impact?**

I think the academic champion works pretty well, as a way of making sure the strategy is rolled out in an effective way. In my department, people have said ‘oh look what Alison is doing this is quite interesting’ and have talked to me about it, so that has changed perceptions. I think there’s work to be done in other departments, we have a number of key stakeholders but we need to make sure they’re not isolated individuals, but that it is a departmentally-encouraged behaviour. But I think it will be pushing at an open door.

**Are there any areas you feel are lacking support or motivation?**

I think an important strand of development activities would be rewarding public engagement in terms of academic promotion, that’s not something that happens at the moment. I think the other thing is to enable researchers to have a lot of one-on-one support and the opportunity to develop activities in collaboration with PER professionals within the University. I think there will be a requirement moving forward for more institutional support of posts, obviously without posts you don’t get stuff done. I also think there’s work to be done in departments. I think it’s important to engage with departmental strategy groups, with heads of department because you can’t do it unless you have buy in from those senior leaders. I think having continuity of good people in support posts is key, and then having a close relationship with departments at senior level is the second thing that’s absolutely key. It’s really crucial to have that high-level involvement of heads of department and so on, all underpinned by high quality administrative posts.

**In summary:** it is felt that PER is well supported at a University-wide level. It is thought that actions such as the seed funding and the VC awards as well as having departmental stakeholders has changed how researchers view PER, although it is acknowledged there is further work to be done. The appointment of staff members as public engagement support who can collaborate with researchers and form good relationships with senior departmental staff is seen as important in progressing PER departmentally.

8.3 Professor Richard Scholar

Richard is a Professor in French in the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages and was awarded a PER Seed Fund in 2016/17 for a theatre project based on Thomas More’s ‘Utopia’.

He talks about a theatre project based on Thomas More’s ‘Utopia’ for which the CSF awarded funding for through the PER Seed Fund, and how the wider support available provided also helped inform and improve the project as a whole.
“I recognise there’s a particular energy around PER activities now, and I think that is partly due to the work of the PER team in the central university, and I think the way they operate, to offer help and allow people to take ideas in directions that they want to, I think that is a good model for making these things successful.”

How did the CSF award help your project?

I went to a very useful seminar that had been organised by the PER team about how you measure and evaluate success of these sort of projects and that led me to think about different ways in which we might hear from the public as to what they made of our project and how they wanted to contribute to it. It caused us to modify our initial project plan and we were sensitised to the different publics that were involved and the different ways you might truly engage with those publics. If we hadn’t got the funding I think we would have done 80% of what we did. The extra 20% is the money that was awarded but the rest is the educative aspect of being involved with the fund. These are small awards but the support they provide is really valuable, and it goes quite a long way.

Has the project and the support you’ve had been noticed?

I think it has been noticed within the Faculty, but it’s been noticed in the way that many things are noticed. I hope that part of what we’ve done is to help the faculty to understand the impact agenda a bit better. It might be useful to ask me this question again in two or three years’ time to see what happens and how much it’s recognised as being part of the Faculty’s work. I mean it certainly is part of the Faculty’s work, but it’s a relatively new agenda that’s met with some mild ambivalence. I think this project is one of a series of initiatives at the University which certainly have helped to raise the profile of public engagement, and that PER is more on the radar of the Faculty than before.

Has the way PER is viewed changed across the University, do you think?

I recognise there’s a particular energy around PER activities now, and I think that is partly due to the work of the PER team in the central university, and I think the way they operate, to offer help and allow people to take ideas in directions that they want to, I think that is a good model for making these things successful.

In summary: the grants available as part of the Catalyst Seed Fund are seen as effective and helpful in creating more and better public engagement activities. The wider support coming from the fund, such as seminars and other activities from the central PER team are appreciated and said to be influential in shaping and developing public engagement activities at the university.
8.4 Professor David Griffiths

David is an Official Fellow and Reader in Archaeology in the Department for Continuing Education.

He explains how the department is the origin of Oxford’s engagement with the public, and describes the support for engagement activities he’s experienced and observed throughout the university.

“The PER team we’ve got now is going around vigorously promoting public engagement, there wasn’t anything like that [when we started our PER project ten years ago]. We just had to do it ourselves really.”

What public engagement activities have you been involved in?

We saw an opportunity in about 2007/8 to do a big locally-based project engaging local communities in archaeological research. It was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, after starting with a small grant from the Fell fund. It all came together and several other parts of the University realised what we were doing and were very cooperative. The Department of Continuing Education has its own infrastructure, a finance office and so forth, and they were really helpful, and also the Ashmolean and Pitt Rivers, who opened their behind the scenes doors to our volunteers, and Christchurch and Oriel who were extremely helpful in letting us have access to their land and archives. We made a new web of connections around the University that was very good.

Do you think the support from the University has changed since this project?

The PER team we’ve got now is going around vigorously promoting public engagement, there wasn’t anything like that in 2008, even 2010. We just had to do it ourselves really. Getting good news stories together and making them prominent in the University’s presentation of itself to the world can only help the perception of the University, and can only help projects to gain currency. Our research facilitator in Cont. Ed. now talks to the PER team quite a lot because we’re trying to get other projects off the ground. There’s a lot more happening, and more knowledge about who else is doing this. The awards were great to be involved in because I could see all these brilliant ideas that other people had had. They’re an unalloyed good for the University, helping it to change its own self-image and to see its role in being more outward looking.

Is there anything else you think could be done to promote PER further?

There’s a limit to what the University can do to influence national audits like the REF, but the REF has been until recently quite unfriendly towards public engagement because it’s not
seen as the same thing as impact. I’m beginning to see signs that that’s changing and that public engagement is going to be treated as more REF-able in the future, and I think that’s a good thing. There’s a lot of competition for funds and I think public engagement, where it forms part of a really viable research endeavor, should enhance that application, should give it a higher scoring rate in terms of the award of funding. There’s also better knowledge of where you can get funding for public engagement activities. I can’t speak for anyone else’s department but if there are any that are still resistant or don’t think this is anything to do with them – they should be asked to look at some of the things that have come through and see if there’s an unfulfilled potential that they’re not taking advantage of I think.

In summary: up to 10 years ago, it is felt that a lot less support and encouragement for public engagement activities was available than there is currently. More awareness of public engagement activities happening in other parts of the University is described, although there is a sense of uncertainty whether all departments have the same level of involvement or interest in public engagement activities.

8.5 Professor Susan Jebb

Susan is Professor of Diet and Population Health in the Medical Sciences Division.

Susan explains how the appointment of public engagement professionals at the University has enabled researchers to become more involved in public engagement activities, and that these activities are now seen to be valued at the top of the University.

“In the past I think there was a sense that it was kind of nice to do but it wasn’t necessary and people should do it in their own time, you know, when they finished all their ‘real work’. I think those days are gone.”

What changes have you seen in relation to public engagement at the University?

I think what has been really impressive over the last few years is that the University has really invested in professionals who do public engagement. We are overrun with fantastic
scientists, many of whom are passionate and enthusiastic about public engagement, but it’s a small part of their job so they tend to dip in and out of it in an often reactive way. Now that the University’s got this network of PE coordinators there’s a sense that there’s a strategy and people are around to help. I think that makes it much easier for researchers to engage and they do it better. The combination of professionals who have a broad view and creative ideas that know the processes and procedures that allows scientists to plug into that and their ideas can grow into something that is much bigger and better and just more professional than they would have been able to do on their own. That I think is a real step change.

The other thing that I think has made a difference is the very strong signal, right from the top, from the Vice Chancellor, that public engagement matters. It’s really really important, the University recognises its value and actively wants to encourage it. In the past I think there was a sense that it was kind of nice to do but it wasn’t necessary and people should do it in their own time, you know, when they finished all their ‘real work’. I think those days are gone. The VC awards have been a good motivator. We are quite competitive folk and if we see a more interesting and exciting activity you can be sure that next year we’ll be trying to up our game and that’s where the awards have been good.

What has brought these changes about?

I think at one level there’s the push from funders, the Research Councils, the Wellcome Trust, and also a pull from scientists who’ve done this and start seeing the value of it. Then there is the University investing, saying ‘actually, to make the most of this we need a structure, we need people who are really focused on it’, and when you have these elements in place then suddenly it starts to happen and you see change and recognise success.

Are there any areas that you feel need more support?

I think the bit we are still struggling on is evaluation. How do we really show the value? That’s the real challenge. I think if we could make some more progress on that, it will feedback into the system and if we could really show the value of what we’re doing it would persuade another batch of people that this is worth spending time and money on.

In summary: the support for public engagement activities is felt to be good, with actions such as cross-University posts and awards demonstrating the change of valuation of public engagement from the University. It is felt that staff at all levels of the University are changing how they think and act about public engagement activities, but that certain aspects such as evaluation need some more support.
8.6 Dr Tom Hart

Dr Tom Hart is a Junior Research Fellow in the Department of Zoology.

His research centres around how to monitor penguins and other marine predators in difficult environments such as Antarctica. Tom discusses how support for outreach and engagement activities has evolved, the importance of public engagement activities in funding applications, and departmental attitudes towards public engagement.

“I’ve been pushed in different ways trying to think more about ‘how are you trying to engage the public?’”

“I think good things are happening but it’s quite slow.”

Do you feel University support for public engagement has changed over the last couple of years?

Absolutely. I think there’s more appetite for outreach and more of a sense that it is a key part of our mission with increasing support.

Previously, we’ve done a lot of outreach off our own backs (media stories and going to schools/museum open days and things like that). The media events we’ve done as press releases where we have a story, for which the press office have been excellent and very supportive. For less direct outreach I felt the University was not as proactive but have been supportive if you push. In particular, they have helped us with outreach videos.

More recently, I feel like outreach at the university level has become more thoughtful and strategic. In particularly, there has been a lot more support. A recent PER training session felt very different and pushed us in different ways trying to think how to engage the in two-way dialogue rather than just telling them about what you do. Basically, I think there’s a lot more support and training that is genuinely helpful and encouraging.
Do you feel there is the same level of support in all areas of the University?

University down, it feels good. Bottom up it seems people need to see more success stories but they’re doing it.

It’s that middle. I think the University’s quite good at seeing the benefit of outreach, but I think groups and departments are less so. What I like about the creation of the PER award was that demonstrates to staff that the University takes it seriously and therefore departments should. I think good things are happening but it’s quite slow. Showing departments that it is worthwhile to them is probably the rate limiting step. After all, there are so many time pressures on staff and the REF is always the main concern.

Is there anything else that has changed in relation to public engagement?

I think that so long as it is taken seriously by grant-giving bodies, it will be valued. I think the University’s activities have definitely enhanced this. I will definitely put in grants going forward in a way that I wouldn’t have before. I wouldn’t have hidden it but it wouldn’t have been a big thing, I certainly wouldn’t have expected them to fund something based on that. Now I think I would see that as a selling point and put budget lines in grants to make these funding bodies and departments recognise engagement as a goal and activity in its own right.

In the couple of years engagement has definitely become more desirable, and I think it’s partly because we also have proof of how effective it is. On the Citizen Science side of things we can demonstrate that now we can do science at a scale that no-one else could and it’s high quality science and it’s validated. Then it ticks two boxes.

At the department or division level I think it needs to be a recognised part of people’s jobs and evaluations. Researchers need to be honest that it’s part of the job, and talk about it in annual reviews or when you look for a promotion. Very simply just try and make it feel valued, whether or not it’s part of a promotion, just talking about it as part of your job, rather than where is the next Nature paper coming from; after all we’re all looking for that.

In summary: it is felt that there is progression in outreach and engagement activities, but the progression is slow. Wider university level the support for outreach activities is said to be good, and at the individual level researchers need to see success stories but there is activity. The middle/departmental level is the area in which outreach and engagement is thought to be least valued and supported.
8.7 Dr Sam Sneddon & Aileen Marshall-Brown

Sam is the Assistant Registrar (Research) and Aileen is the Senior Research Impact Facilitator, both in the Social Sciences Division. See below – receiving their VC PER Award in 2016 for ‘Live Friday: Social Animals’ [Sam – second left; Aileen – far right].

They explain how the way in which researchers view PER activities has evolved, and how support for these has progressed at a wider university level. Some challenges are discussed when thinking about PER interest at a divisional and departmental level.

“You get this kind of spike in interest and then it drops back down again. And I think we’ve got another spike going on because of the Curiosity Carnival, whether that changes culture more permanently I don’t know.”

“How many people aren’t getting the support that they want because they don’t know it’s there?”

Have you seen any evidence of culture change with regard to public engagement?

We held an event in 2015 and there were 10-15 minute slots for talks, and we had one academic who said ‘Oh no, I need at least three hours’, so we were starting from a relatively low base. Aileen worked with the academics to develop their ideas and they were able to come up with some really inventive ways of actually presenting what it was they did. So that example I think has stood us in good stead. I think it was useful but you get this kind of spike in interest and then it drops back down again. And I think we’ve got another spike going on because of the Curiosity Carnival, whether that changes culture more permanently I don’t know. I think the trick with culture change is providing the incentive and the platform for the academics.
**What are the biggest challenges you come across when trying to support PER?**

Academics will just engage with it at the point they want to, and actually they don’t mind where the support comes from. But then how many people aren’t getting the support that they want because they don’t know it’s there? If someone’s at a senior level in a department and they’re saying there’s no public engagement support at the University that’s the message that’s believed, and that’s really difficult to overcome.

There’s a number of challenges. Getting a hook in with the academics to get them to see what they could do with it. It’s a challenging task when their performance and their progress as an academic is driven by their publications. There’s no driver in their contracts, there’s no driver from their departments, and the reality is if they want to get on as an academic then publishing in the highest-class journals is the focus. Funding is not such a big driver within the social sciences but a key point that has come up is the longevity of their subject, so that is a route in.

**What are some achievements or positives that you have seen about PER at the University?**

The fact that the University grabbed public engagement and ran with it. The fact that all the Divisions came together to invest time and energy and funding in making sure we had Lesley’s post and provided some additional support for that I think has been really helpful. What Lesley’s created through consensus building is a cohort of people, a community where you can take a team approach to things. You might only be able to influence a small part of the world but if other people are influencing their bits as well then you stand a chance of building the consensus more widely.

There’s been immense progress. At least, there are a number of academics now who at least understand what PER is but it feels like we’re just scratching the surface.

**In summary.** Throughout the University, it is felt there has been progression in PER, although this is thought to be the beginning of a process that needs to continue to grow. Sam and Aileen feel there is good support at the wider University and Divisional levels, but that researchers are not always aware or not motivated to access this. Departmental awareness and interest is quite low, and a wider culture change here to value PER as part of the role of researcher or academic is required.

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**8.8 Naomi Gibson**

Naomi is the Public Engagement Coordinator within the Medical Science Division.
Naomi’s job is to support researchers across the Division to engage in non-academic, primarily public, audiences with their research. She explains that within the Medical Sciences Division, there is variation in how public engagement is viewed, what is seen as public engagement and how important that is to individual departments. The Medical Sciences Division is large, with 5500 researchers, and there is a sense that this makes it difficult for everyone to know there is divisional public engagement support available. The amount of support she is able to provide to each department in the Division generally correlates to whether the departments themselves have dedicated positions or hours for public engagement.

“What has also been really great through the CSF work, the VC awards and the Seed Fund, and the other work on the website with case studies, has been to show the variety and actually have examples for the researchers and really bringing to life the different routes that you could go down.”

What changes in your Division, if any, have been facilitated by CSF would you say?

So I think one of the biggest ones is probably the VC PER awards. What has also been really great through the CSF work, as well as the VC awards is the seed fund, and the other work on the website and the case studies…..to show the variety and actually have examples for the researchers and really bring to life the different routes that you could go down.

How much are you having to initiate contact and how much do people know about you and are coming to you?

So about a third of our departments have a public engagement lead, which is really good, so they don’t need my support because their public engagement lead provides this. A third probably have a post doc or comms officer doing a bit of public engagement, so they don’t have the support, but they know enough to know I exist and direct people to me that have questions. A third have nobody and it’s this third I need to help the most, but they are the hardest to access, the paradox being they just don’t know I exist. I have tried to meet the heads of department and they are not necessarily interested or have the time, and so one of my challenges is how do I try to reach them more. What I think would be quite helpful for me would be to have more senior academics that can help open those doors.

Is there any other support you feel that you would like to offer?

So I think we definitely need to broaden the training - I think it’s an important part of the job. In terms of doing more specific training that would be good, for example one department would like to bring in compulsory public engagement training and activities for their doctoral students and I have said I would happily support them in doing that.

In summary: throughout the departments of the Medical Sciences Division, there are differing levels of interaction with the divisional support role for public engagement. Some departments are well supported internally, however others less so. The CSF and in particular the VC PER awards are described as having an effect on attitudes towards public engagement.
engagement for some, but that more effort is required for others. For the latter group, the main challenges are described as a mixture of attitude towards public engagement from senior figures in departments, and lack of awareness from researchers working within departments.

**9.0 Conclusions**

**9.1 Oxford’s CSF Project**

The University of Oxford set five main objectives that have been evaluated against, and we conclude that all five of the objectives have been met:

*Objective 1:*

We have built capacity for research and support staff to develop and resource high-quality Public Engagement with Research activities via:

The provision of training (An Introduction to PER; Building PER into research grants; evaluation training; developing engaging PER activities); the GLAM–PER scoping project; *Curiosity Carnival; The Conversation*, provision of PER Seed Funding; supporting PI’s to develop high-quality PER programmes; generating additional resource for PER activities.

*Objective 2:*

We have developed and piloted a training course and new resources to equip staff with the skills, tools and knowledge to better understand and gather evidence for public engagement as a route to research impact; these training courses will be rolled out across the University and resources will be available online; and we will be very active in aiming to ensure that PER plays a more prominent role in the next REF.

*Objective 3:*

We have promoted Public Engagement with Research and demonstrated the University’s commitment to it through a whole raft of internal and external communications channels (print; online; social media; films); events, presentations and stakeholder engagement activities.
Objective 4:

We have recognised and rewarded high-quality Public Engagement with Research activity through the VC PER Awards and other mechanisms.

Objective 5:

We have evaluated the outcomes and impact of the CSF programme in multiple ways and established baseline measures to track progress in the future.

We have also provided quantitative and qualitative evidence and data that indicates that the culture for supporting high-quality PER to take place at Oxford has changed for the better, enabling both those new to this agenda to participate, but also helping those who are experienced to do their work even more effectively and with greater impact and be recognised and rewarded for their achievements. Although there is still much work to be done to engage those, as yet, ‘hard to reach’ departments and researchers.

What we have now is a much more coherent, coordinated and systematic approach for staff and students to engage, a growing PER network and community that have a better understanding of PER, together with a strong foundation of policies, activities, tools, resources and platforms in place to work towards Oxford’s vision to:

“Embed high-quality and innovative public engagement as an integral part of research culture and practice at Oxford, enhancing our position as a world-leading research institution.”

Oxford’s PER Strategic Plan

The CSF grants programme, has been extremely beneficial for Oxford in starting its strategic and institutional PER journey. The funding has been particularly valuable for demonstrating ‘proof of concept’ for a number of key activities, such as the PER Seed Fund and VC PER Awards for which we were able to a) invite key stakeholders to participate first-hand and gain their buy-in b) show that there is clear demand for these activities and that they are valued and c) demonstrate the benefits, outcomes and impacts that arise as a result.

Without this, it’s difficult to see how we could have put a successful case forward (over and above the rhetoric) to the University’s Knowledge Exchange and Impact Sub-Committee to fund the strategic PER programme through HEIF, in which competition for funds was already fierce (historically – Oxford’s HEIF allocation had made no provision for PER).
Our key Recommendation for RCUK/UKRI: We appreciate that the landscape of UK’s research funding landscape is undergoing significant change at present. That said, we recommend that the SEE-PER\(^1\) grant scheme, or similar, becomes an annual call for funding (from RCUK or UKRI) for strategic support for PER in HEIs and research institutes.

While there is funding available for PER activities and projects (through Wellcome, Research Council, National Academy and Learned Society grants etc), there is a clear need and demand to continue to support strategic PER activities for those HEIs that are new to this agenda and for those more experienced and aiming to further enrich their PER culture and supporting mechanisms and to innovate in this regard. In respect to the last point, it is significantly easier to seek sustainable internal funding from one’s own HEI, once proof of concept has been established and evidence gained.

The value of the CSF network and workshops, facilitated by the NCCPE, was also very beneficial for a whole host of reasons and we feel adds significant value to the whole programme. Our second recommendation for RCUK/UKRI/NCCPE therefore is to continue to offer a facilitated platform or shared space for HEIs (eg CSFs; Catalysts and Beacon universities) and their key staff to discuss; debate and share best (and worst!) practice for continuing to embed culture change for PER.

9.2 Recommendations for other HEIs aiming to better support PER

9.2.1 Key recommendation: be bold in defining what PER is (and is not)

Oxford’s Public Engagement with Research definition and vision is very focused, and this, in turn, has enabled the activities that we funded through CSF to stay within scope, which has resulted in demonstrable outcomes and impacts and strong indications of culture change.

The focus on enabling excellence has been key for us at Oxford, rather than aiming to simply increase the volume of Public Engagement with Research activity. We defined excellence in public engagement as having two key goals/outcomes:

- It increases the quality and/or impact of the research
- It directly benefits both parties (i.e. the researchers and the participating public).

We also defined the public as individuals (young people; adults or families), groups or communities who do not currently have a formal relationship with a Higher Education Institution – for example through teaching or research or knowledge transfer – but who may have general or vested interests in the research. [i.e. the following are not considered public audiences: policy makers; those with business reasons to engage or a professional interest; potential or existing Oxford undergraduates].

\(^1\) Strategic Support to Expedite Embedding Public Engagement with Research
This clarity of thinking has been invaluable to us and underpinned absolutely every activity we have developed and delivered as part of the CSF, and our wider PER programme. This does not mean that all HEIs should have the same definition, but we would recommend that each HEI should decide for itself what PER is; what it encompasses, and just as importantly, what it is not. Otherwise there is a tendency to try and ‘boil the ocean’.

Oxford’s commitment to quality does not mean that researchers, support staff and departments are expected to understand, develop and deliver outstanding PER from the ‘get-go’ – PER is a life-long learning venture and it is essential to facilitate and support people as they take their own journeys of discovery. As noted by Professor Sarah Whatmore, previous Academic Champion for PER:

“My own experience has been invaluable as a store of examples to draw on, good and bad. We must get away from the idea that one instantly has to become the best practitioner of public engagement with research, and that all public engagement has to be successful. Like any good academic work, we need to innovate and engage constituencies that perhaps have not traditionally been engaged in the research process. This involves a degree of experimentation, and we must allow for some less successful ventures. These are very important learning experiences, and they’re what helps us to produce the really cutting edge work.”

9.2.2 Other recommended activities that worked well at Oxford

- Create some sort of strategy or plan (or similar) and be very inclusive, consultative and collaborative in developing it so that it is owned, and felt to be owned by the key stakeholders. Also – while listening is key – so is leadership – least a camel be created instead of a horse. Once the plan is signed off – be resolute and stick to it.

- Find out and meet other colleagues working in other engagement areas (eg Community engagement; Outreach; Widening Participation; Knowledge Exchange; Policy Engagement etc) so you know where to direct someone when they come to the PER team for something that is out of scope.

- In order to demonstrate that PER is part of ‘normal’ practice and culture there are advantages to embedding it into existing mechanisms rather than creating new ones. For example, we did not create a new PER Committee at Oxford for formal oversight and governance – instead PER is now the responsibility of the University’s Research Committee. This Committee alongside two ‘informal’ groups (i.e. no ‘official’ decision-making powers but lots of soft power and influence) – the PER Advisory Group (PER AG) and PER Academic Advisory Network (PER ANN) works extremely well for us at Oxford.

- Understanding the different cultures and languages of PER across the academic disciplines, the museums and collections, Continuing Education and the administration
services is key if the resulting strategic PER activities, projects, events and funding schemes are to be accessible to all (PER AG and PER AAN play very important roles here).

- As resource is nearly always fairly small (staff and project funds), we aimed to ensure that each of the activities and projects we developed and delivered achieved more than one objective. For example – the VC PER Awards not only recognises and rewards but also demonstrates leadership buy-in; raises the profile of best practice and fosters a growing PER community at Oxford. This ‘multiplier-effect’ can be really effective in achieving an impact – with each activity continually re-enforcing key messages and contributing to multiple objectives.

- Maximise the potential to build relationships and capacity for PER and increase understanding of what high-quality PER looks like, with every activity. For example, we utilised the PER Seed Fund and VC Award review and judging panels as not only a mechanism to make decisions but to also make ‘friends’ and influence thinking and understanding.

- ‘Practice what you preach’. As high-quality PER was something we are aiming for at Oxford, we aimed to ensure that each of our strategic PER activities were developed and delivered to the highest quality. As with PER, we felt it was better to do a smaller number (but some very large scale) activities very well.

- The need for a variety of ‘entry-points’ and ways for research staff and students and support staff to become engaged is key. While the Strategic Plan is a motivator for some, others are encouraged by the opportunity to get involved in practical activities or training; or stimulated by the possibility of a VC PER Award, new funding or a REF impact case study.

9.2.3 Horses for Courses

The above ways of working were beneficial for us at Oxford, but as we know from discussing our shared experiences across all the CSF HEIs, and also the Catalyst and Beacons universities, what works (and what does not) may depend on a number of factors such as the Institution’s:

- history, culture and values;
- organisational structure;
- overall strategy and vision;
- and where the strategic PER staff member/ team is based (eg External Affairs or Research Services).

9.3 Next steps at Oxford

As noted in the Sustainability Plans section, we will continue with the ‘core’ strategic programme of activities that has been developed and piloted through CSF. As gathered from the evaluation of CSF, the strongest steer, from many sources of evidence, is that we
also now need to focus on supporting departments – work in this area has already started and plans are underway.

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