Public Engagement and Knowledge Exchange Strategy 2013/14

Why a public engagement and knowledge exchange strategy?

Our public engagement and knowledge exchange strategy helps us to achieve our vision and mission, and to support two of our seven goals.

The Institute's vision is of: excellent research contributing to better population health and wellbeing and fewer inequalities in health and wellbeing.

Our Mission is to: provide robust and timely evidence to inform policies and practices that will improve population health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities in these.

Two of our seven Goals include getting our research known and into practice:

- engaging and collaborating with policymakers and practitioners to ensure policies and practices are evidence informed
- engaging with basic and clinical scientists and with industry to ensure that developing approaches to improve health and wellbeing are effectively translated into clinical practice

What we mean by public engagement and knowledge exchange?

Public engagement describes the things we do to connect and share our research with the public. When we do it well it can generate mutual benefit, with all parties learning from each other through sharing knowledge, expertise and skills. The process can build trust, understanding and collaboration, and increase the sector's relevance to, and impact on, civil society.

See: http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/what

Knowledge exchange describes the two-way flow of knowledge, understanding and information that takes place during interactions between people who undertake research and people who may use it or be interested in its findings and includes co-creation of research agendas and projects with partners in civic society, NHS and social care agencies, government and other potential research users. It recognises that knowledge can be based on different kinds of research as well as on experience.

Activities can include events to share knowledge generated in academic and research institutions with the public to understand how it interacts with their and others’ knowledge. Public engagement activities include any interaction with a non-specialist audience but not activities solely for commercialisation, PR, recruitment, schools outreach or widening participation.
The Institute of Health and Wellbeing encourages three kinds of overlapping activities.

**Informing:** writing accessible versions of our research findings and disseminating them through websites, blogs, newsletters, slide packs; taking opportunities to present research through press releases and subsequent media interviews; taking part in science festivals or running public events.

**Consulting:** actively listening to potential stakeholders’ views, concerns or insights and using them to influence our research or research priorities. Listening might take place in public meetings or discussion events, in meetings with civic society partners, government workers or other groups of stakeholders, or in on-line consultations.

**Collaborating:** working with partners in to co-create the research we do and to make use of it in policy and practice to shorten the ‘pathways to impact’

All of these activities can be done by research and academic staff and by our PGT and PGR students.

**Our mission for public engagement and knowledge exchange**

To encourage, support and build capacity for activities to share our research with the policymakers, practitioners, other scientists and the public.

To do this we will focus our activities to achieve the University’s Knowledge Exchange Strategy [http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/rsio/knowledgeexchange/](http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/rsio/knowledgeexchange/)

Our strategic aims for KE/PE are to:

- provide leadership to increase PE/KE activities across the Institute;
- Support a shared understanding of public engagement and knowledge exchange across the Institute;
- Embed public engagement and knowledge exchange in all of our activities;
- Ensure good internal communications of our activities and strategy.

**Our approach to public engagement and knowledge exchange**

A key principle of our public engagement and knowledge exchange activities is that these have to be focused and specific. We regard it as essential to target the appropriate end users for any particular topic, and to customise the methods of knowledge exchange and public engagement for each topic and type of user, rather than assuming one-size-fits all.

We emphasise the importance of identifying at the outset of any research activity whom the appropriate partners and beneficiaries are likely to be, and the measures required to ensure early engagement with them to maximise research impact i.e. from the very beginning of a research project, not only planning the project and academic dissemination, but also the appropriate audiences and types of knowledge exchange and public engagement activities. We therefore encourage a wide range of approaches as appropriate to the particular research and likely users.
Delivering the strategy

To help deliver the strategy, and operationalise this approach, the IHW will implement the following practices:

Leadership for public engagement and knowledge exchange

Leadership is necessary at all levels of the Institute. To ensure we meet our strategic aims we have:

- posted a statement of support for PE/KE activities from the Director on our website;
- appointed a Deputy Director as champion of knowledge exchange activities;
- established a public engagement and knowledge exchange group with champions from each research group;
- appointed convenors of short life working-groups to lead the activities of the group.

The group meets quarterly to discuss opportunities and planning of PE & KE activity.

Shared understanding of and skills for public engagement and knowledge exchange

We will run a series of activities, some jointly with other University organisations, to support a shared understanding of the importance of PE and KE and to increase confidence and skills. These will include:

- An annual workshop and seminar for research and academic staff on writing for blogs, use of social media and pathways to impact and seminars providing training on specific PE & KE activities (including annual events run by and for PGR and research staff on writing blogs, using social media and other suggested topics);
- Contribute to a training resource for creating ‘pathways to impact’ for research with Policy Scotland [http://policyscotland.gla.ac.uk/];
- Provide case studies on the IHW website showing good examples of PE & KE activity carried out in the institute;
- Provide descriptions on the IHW website from IHW researchers about their PE & KE activity;
- Provide resources on the IHW website for getting started with public engagement and knowledge exchange.

Embedding public engagement and knowledge exchange in our activities

To embed public engagement and knowledge exchange in all activities we will:

- Recognise and reward KE/PE activities through the Performance and Development Review (P&DR) process. Line managers will recognise and praise innovative knowledge exchange activities, and in particular, evidence of its impact. Clear goals for public engagement and knowledge exchange activities will also be set each year and audited annually through a review of P&DR forms.
• Ensure that resources are available on our website to support staff to plan public engagement and knowledge exchange activities for each project. They will be supported to consider:

  1. Who will be interested in either the process or the findings of their research;
  2. What forms of communication are best to reach which audiences;
  3. To make a plan for public engagement and knowledge exchange activities alongside their project and publication planning;
  4. To take time to get new ideas and learn new skills in public engagement and knowledge exchange through the resources we provide access to and other sources;
  5. To think about how the impact of their activities can be assessed.

• Ensure good access to training for KE/PE and impact, either through our own workshops and seminars or through using the resources of other University organisations including the training programmes available centrally.

Ensuring good communications of our activities and strategy
We will provide opportunities for communicating our public engagement and knowledge exchange activities both internally and externally by:

Internal
• Convening quarterly meetings of the PE and KE strategy group;
• Reporting on plans and activities at IHW management group and at Group meetings;
• Sending briefings on activities to Campus news, MVLS and CSS newsletters;
• Providing a list of venues suitable for activities and how to book them made available on website.

External
• Promoting events, including public seminars, on website in at least one month in advance with clear instructions on how to book and get to the venue;
• Provide two opportunities per year for IHW staff to meet with policy makers, practitioners and civic society partners to share ideas and priorities;
• Providing case studies of KE activities on website.