



# Public Engagement with Research Strategic Plan 2024-2027



**UNIVERSITY  
OF LEEDS**

# Vision and mission

## Vision

To make research relevant in people's lives by creating and sustaining informed and engaged academic and public communities that actively shape, participate in and benefit from research.

## Mission

To build strong connections between researchers and the public, enhancing the impact and relevance of research through inclusive and ethical engagement and participation.



# Context

This strategic plan is informed by and relates to objectives of the following strategies and documents (see Annex pg 12-14):

- UKRI 2022-27 Strategy
- UoL Research and Innovation Strategy
- UoL Enabling Strategy
- UoL Engaged for Impact Strategy
- UoL Cultural Engagement Strategy
- UoL Research Culture Strategy
- UoL Open Research Statement
- Manifesto for Public Engagement
- UNESCO Open Science Framework



# Definition

As Manifesto for Public Engagement signatories, we adhere to the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement's (NCCPE) definition of Public Engagement (<https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/introducing-public-engagement>), which describes the many ways organisations seek to involve the public in their work. For universities this covers a range of types of engagement, for instance 'civic' or 'community' engagement, which are part of the same family. Public engagement with research is also part of '[Open research](#)'

Within this Strategic Plan, Public Engagement with Research (PEWR) at the University of Leeds describes the many ways the public and communities can participate in the development, activities and benefits of research. This engagement is a collaborative process built on a foundation of trust and ethical practice for mutual benefit.



# Strategic goals

## Connectivity

We strive to streamline connections between research and communities, working with organisations that increase local impact. Our goal is to make it simpler for community members to engage with research while setting clear collaboration standards of trust and ethical practice for mutual benefit.

## Engagement and participation

We are committed to pursuing, supporting, and enhancing responsible engagement with various communities, from children to adults in Leeds to make sure from all backgrounds grow up and live in an environment where research is relevant and accessible to them. We aim to integrate research with high quality engagement practice, and lower barriers to engagement both within and outside the institution.

## Ethical partnership working

We will collaborate with colleagues, organisations, and partners to create a blueprint for genuine partnership. By incorporating an evaluation strand, we ensure transparency, value diverse contributions, clarify support needs for equal participation, and achieve fair distribution of leadership, power, resources, risks, and recognition.

## Leadership

We lead initiatives to support public engagement with research at the university, providing consultation, advice, and direction to both internal and external stakeholders. Our support includes training, advocating for public engagement with research at an institutional level, and championing high-quality public engagement with research to ensure the successful delivery of our strategy. We want to grow a reputation for innovative, sector-leading public engagement with research.

# Our values

In embodying these values, we aim to enrich both research endeavours and the communities we serve, fostering a culture of inclusivity, collaboration, and mutual respect.

## Partnership

- Respect for communities is fundamental.
- Transparency and trust are paramount in all engagement and participation
- Activities are developed collaboratively with communities.
- Activities are appropriate for communities, the research project, and researchers.

## Potential

- Empowering staff to recognise the potential impact of engaging with and involving communities in research.
- Training staff to achieve their public engagement aims.
- Championing and rewarding researchers who are committed to good practice.
- Cultivating resilient public engagement professionals.

## Equity

- Ensuring public engagement is done in an equitable environment.
- Recognising that collaboration and working in partnership is complicated and requires knowledge and resource to succeed
- Complete accessibility for communities, including fair compensation for those providing their expertise.
- Valuing all disciplines equally across the University.

# Objectives

## 1. Facilitate dialogue

We will create platforms and opportunities for meaningful and barrier-free dialogue and knowledge exchange between researchers and the public and internally for PE championship and advocacy.

- i. Be Curious: Host regular events where researchers present their work and engage with the public; this includes online platforms, on campus and off campus locations and co-location with other ongoing events.
- ii. Creative outputs: Develop creative assets that make research tangible and provide different access to research.
- iii. Website and social media: Develop an engaging online presence with accessible content, including blogs, videos, and interactive tools on selected platforms.
- iv. Voice: Promote national platform for research involvement increasing participating numbers and raise awareness of research carried out at Leeds
- v. Communication: Emphasize the value and strategic importance of public engagement (including PEWR's role in values-led Gen Z students) to internal audiences to elevate PEWR's profile and leveraging championship and advocacy by senior management.
- vi. Maximising resources: Harness existing job roles across the University with PEWR-component for successful strategy delivery.

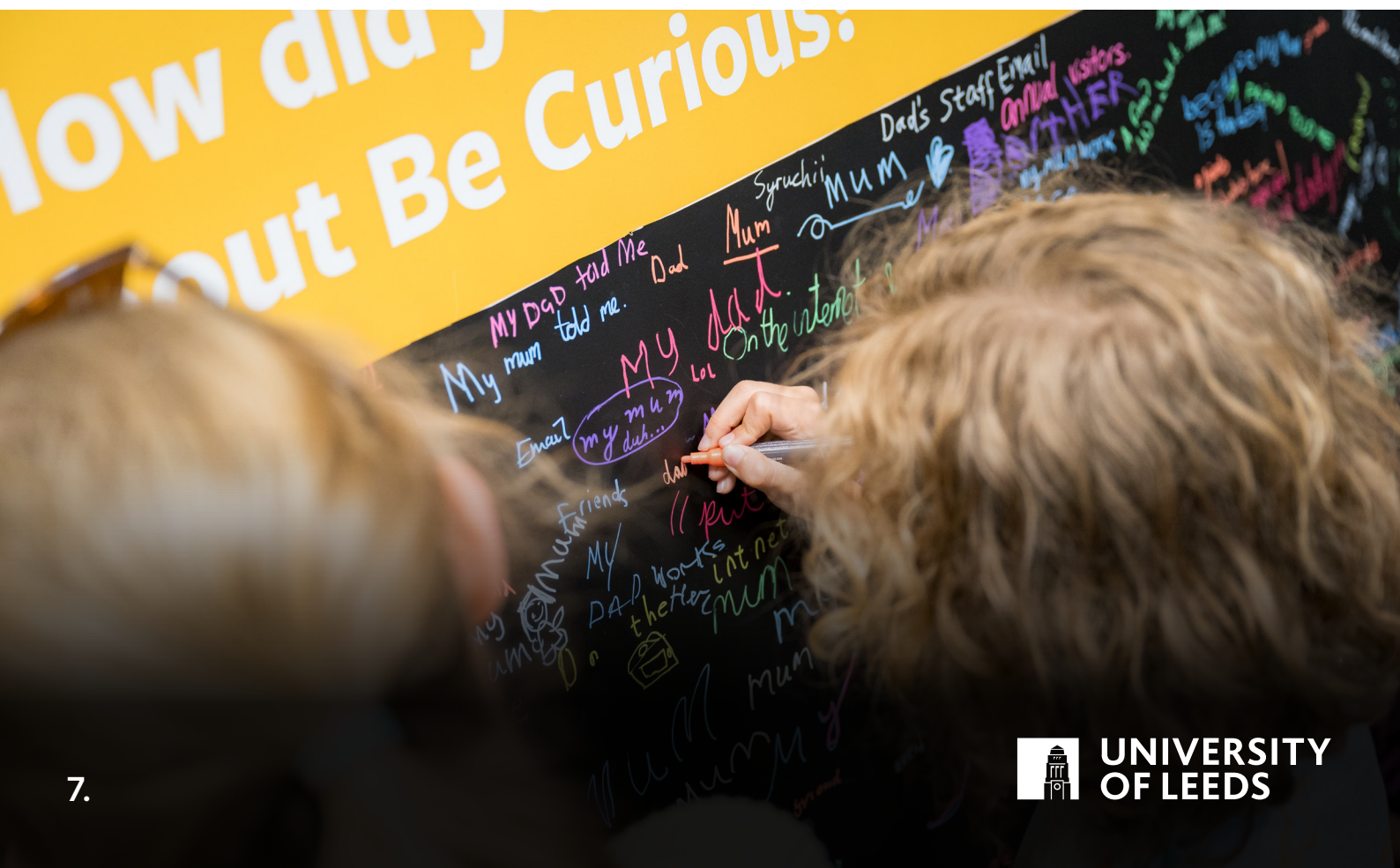


## Objectives (contd.)

## 2. Build trust

We will develop trust and credibility with the public and research through transparency and ethical practices.

- i. Our researchers: showcase and promote our researchers and their engagement activities for further interactions, including PhD students
- ii. Public Advisory Panel: Establish a Be Curious Community Board comprising community representatives to provide input into programming
- iii. Primary School Network: Collaborate across the institution to coordinate engagement with primary schools.
- iv. Local Organisations: Partner with organisations, community groups, libraries, museums, and the local council to make research relevant in people's lives.



# Objectives (contd.)

## 3. Foster participation

We will encourage and support active public involvement and participation in research.

- i. Professional development for Researchers: Curate sessions and resources to support researchers with participatory research practices, to help them engage and communicate effectively and ethically with communities.
- ii. Engaged Research Team: provide and maintain a space for shared knowledge
- iii. Engaged Research coordination: Contribute institutional coordination and steer for payments, involvement standards and data protection.
- iv. Funding: Offer seed corn funding to develop engagement activities and to maintain community relationships; oversee allocation of institutional funding for participatory research.
- v. Advice: Triage enquiries, offer bespoke advice for engagement activities, research proposals, and refer to colleagues as appropriate.
- vi. Recognition: Facilitate knowledge sharing, collaboration and visibility of PEWR practice on an institutional level and support the Research Impact and Engagement Awards
- vii. Next generation: build on existing provision to develop PEWR pathways for (PG) students.

# Objectives (contd.)

## 4. Evaluating engagement and impact

We will develop an understanding of what works and what benefits people obtain.

- i. Regional universities: Develop relationships with local and regional universities for shared learning and leadership in PEWR
- ii. Evidence: Identify success indicators and develop processes and systems for evidence collection of impact from public engagement for external assessment (KEF, REF, Watermark)
- iii. Impact Assessment: Conduct regular assessments to measure the impact of public engagement on research and communities.



# Monitoring and evaluation

## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Number of public engagement activities conducted and facilitated.
- Number of academics and researchers involved and trained
- Participation rates and demographic diversity of participants.
- Public feedback and satisfaction scores.
- Media coverage and social media engagement metric

## Regular Reviews:

Conduct quarterly and annual reviews to evaluate progress against strategic goals and KPIs. Adjust strategies as necessary based on findings.



# Sustainability and future growth

## Long-term partnerships:

Establish and nurture long-term relationships with community organisations, educational institutions, and other stakeholders.

## Continuous improvement:

Foster a culture of continuous improvement by regularly updating engagement strategies based on feedback and emerging trends.

## Scalability:

Develop scalable models for successful engagement activities to expand their reach and impact over time.

This strategy provides a roadmap for meaningful and sustained public engagement with research, ensuring that research activities are transparent, inclusive, and beneficial to society.



List of strategies and their objectives that have informed the Strategic Plan for Public Engagement with Research:

## UKRI 2022-27 Strategy

### Principles for Change:

**Connectivity:** connecting people and knowledge

**Engagement:** Engagement is needed to build effective collaboration and genuine partnerships between the research and innovation system and its many stakeholders, including those who may not see themselves as part of the system.

**Objective 3:** champion an agile and responsive research and innovation funding environment that embraces **curiosity, creativity**, and risk-taking and encourages a **diversity of ideas across all disciplines and sectors**, recognising the importance of teams.

UKRI also committed to improving public involvement in health and social care research.

## Research and Innovation Strategy

**RI1. Support our researchers and research staff across their entire careers to help them achieve their full potential and deliver fundamental and challenge-led research that will shape our future world. We will:**

Recognise, value and support high-quality research that leads equally to academic outputs, innovation, social impact, public engagement and policy reform.

**RI3. Remove institutional barriers to support interdisciplinarity and effective external partnerships.**

Increase the breadth and depth of partnerships with our key partners across business and the public sector.

## Enabling Strategy

### Our role in the city and region

We will engage and collaborate with the local community and civic partners, with a focus on the public good and driving benefit to the region in the context of post-pandemic recovery.

# Annex (contd.)

## Engaged for Impact Strategy

**We want to enable staff to step confidently into the world to make it a better place through their engaged research practice by:**

- embedding engaged research as the cornerstone of impact
- mobilising more researchers to practice engaged research by valuing all forms of impact that arise from research
- growing and accelerating the impact from our engaged research and build on good engagement for impact practice.
- energising staff and increase their satisfaction about making a difference with their research.

## Cultural Engagement Strategy

Nurture audience, community and public engagement through cultural activities

## UoL Research Culture Strategy

### **Strategic Objective 3: Enabling open research practices**

Expressed in our Open Research Statement, open research practices strive for collaborative working, sharing, and openness throughout the entire research cycle to enable transparency, reproducibility and the reduction of inequalities whilst maximising the reach of our research. We will ensure that our communities are fully supported, in ways appropriate for their discipline, to work openly and with the highest standards of integrity.

**Project 3.4:** We will develop the Open Research Hub, a central location signposting researchers to all local support for open research (e.g., Research IT; Public Engagement; RIS; Library).

## Open Research Statement

From the Open Research Statement: In the context of a supportive, inclusive, and collaborative research culture, open research practices strive for collaborative working, sharing and openness throughout the entire research cycle to enable transparency, reproducibility, and the reduction of inequalities. These practices include:

- Research collaboration, transparency, and public engagement

## Manifesto for Public Engagement

We signed the Manifesto for Public Engagement in 2015 and renewed it in 2018

“We believe that universities and research institutes have a major responsibility to contribute to society through their public engagement, and that they have much to gain in return.

We are committed to sharing our knowledge, resources and skills with the public, and to listening to and learning from the expertise and insight of the different communities with which we engage.

We are committed to developing our approach to managing, supporting and delivering public engagement for the benefit of staff, students and the public, and to sharing what we learn about effective practice.”

## UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science

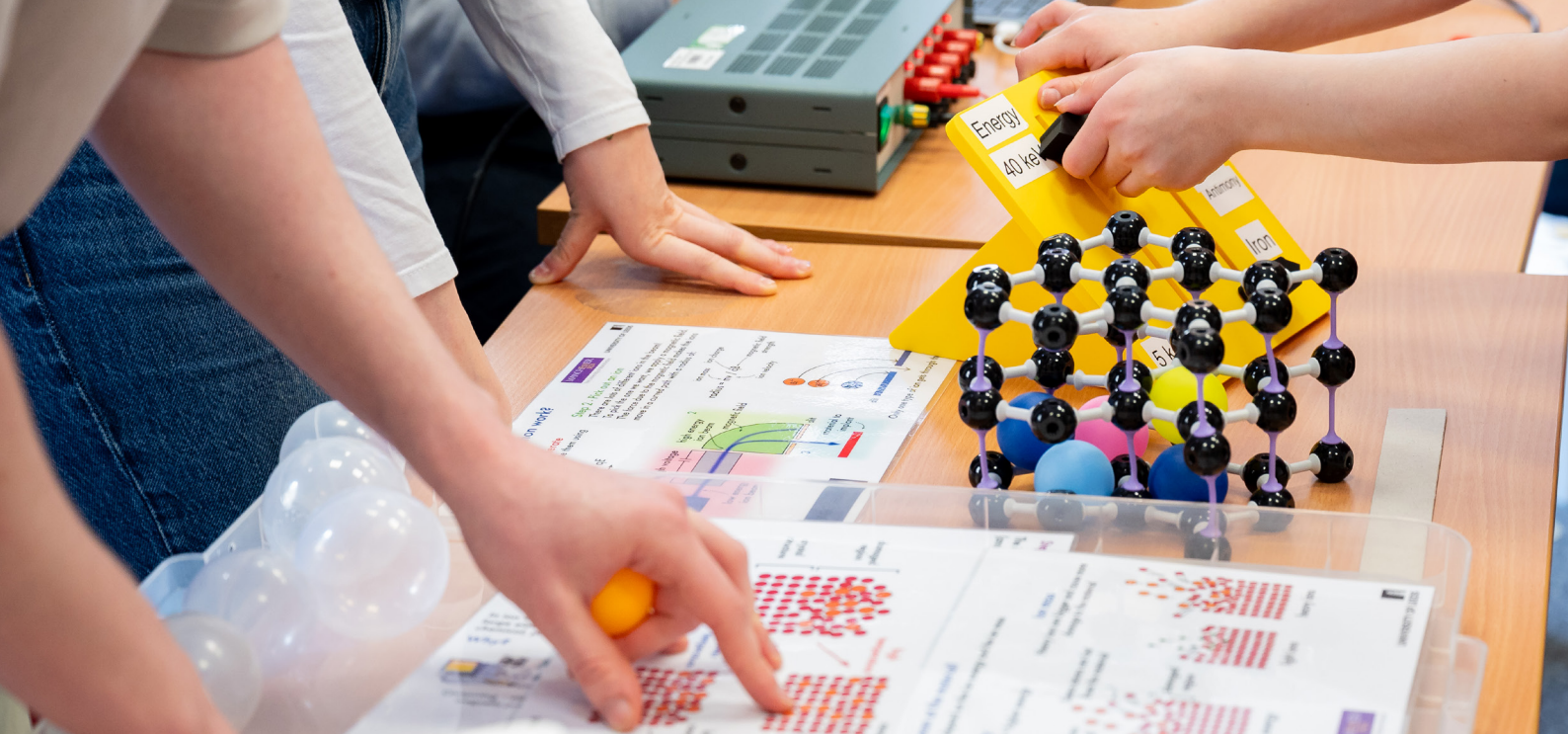
### **Pillar: Open Engagement of societal actors**

refers to extended collaboration between researchers and societal actors beyond the scientific community, by opening up practices and tools that are part of the research cycle and by making the scientific process more inclusive and accessible to the broader inquiring society based on new forms of collaboration and work.

### **Pillar: Open dialogue with other knowledge systems**

Refers to the dialogue between different knowledge holders, that recognizes the richness of diverse knowledge systems and epistemologies and diversity of knowledge producers in line with the 2001 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. It aims to promote the inclusion of knowledge from traditionally marginalized scholars and enhance inter-relationships and complementarities between diverse epistemologies, adherence to international human rights norms and standards, respect for knowledge sovereignty and governance, and the recognition of rights of knowledge holders to receive a fair and equitable share of benefits that may arise from the utilization of their knowledge.





## Our team

**Dr. Alexa Ruppertsberg**, Head of Public Engagement with Research  
[a.c.i.ruppertsberg@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:a.c.i.ruppertsberg@leeds.ac.uk)

**Celine Roblin-Robson**, Public Engagement Officer  
[c.roblin-robson@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:c.roblin-robson@leeds.ac.uk)

**Andy Guy**, Digital Creative Officer  
[a.guy@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:a.guy@leeds.ac.uk)



Discover more on our SharePoint  
[bit.ly/3C6SYpj](https://bit.ly/3C6SYpj)

