



Scottish Public Engagement Network

Report of the ScotPEN 2nd annual meeting for Public Engagement Professionals in Higher Education and Research

Tuesday 19th June 2018

Glasgow University Union, 32 University Avenue

Glasgow G12 8LX



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Welcome

Welcome to the report of the ScotPEN 2018 Annual Meeting for Public Engagement Professionals (PEPs) in Higher Education and research. This was a one-day meeting held at Glasgow University Union and hosted by the Engagement Team of the University of Glasgow's College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences. Over 40 PEPs came from all over Scotland, as well as speakers from the University of Dundee, University College London and the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement. We were also delighted to welcome representatives from funders Wellcome, UK Research and Innovation, and the Scottish Funding Council.

ScotPEN is an inclusive network of people involved in public engagement in Scotland, from universities and research institutes to third sector and private organizations and also freelance professionals. Supported by funding from Wellcome's Institutional Strategic Support Fund, the five Scottish ISSF-funded universities are taking turns to host ScotPEN from 2017-2021. Following exploratory meetings in 2017, it was decided that this would include an annual meeting for PEPs. These meetings are intended to

- facilitate collaboration and sharing of good practice in Scottish HEIs relating to public engagement (PE) and public engagement with research (PER).
- support policy and strategy development for these fields in Scotland.
- focus on topics suggested by members.

An important aspect of PEPs' meetings is that learning from the meetings is shared widely. This report itself is intended to act as a useful resource; the session summaries focus on tools and opportunities to get involved and benefit from the network. The [Links and Resources](#) section includes speaker slides and further reading.

There are plenty of opportunities to get involved with ScotPEN – you can read about these in the report and find contact details at the end.

Schedule

ScotPEN PEPs' meeting

Registration open from 10.30 in the Debates Chamber foyer with coffee, tea and biscuits.

11.00 – 11.15 Welcome address: [Kevin O'Dell](#), Dean of Public Engagement.

11.15 – 11.30 Re-cap of ScotPEN's scope/purpose and highlights of the last year's activity.

11.30 – 12.00 Invited speaker: [Erin Hardee](#) and [Amy Cameron](#), University of Dundee.
Presentation/Q&A on the School of Life Sciences' experience of the [NCCPE Watermark](#) process.

12.00 – 12.40 Invited speakers: [Heather Lusardi](#) and [Paul Manners](#). The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement's new [PEP network](#) – taster session and intersection with ScotPEN.

12.40 – 13.40 Networking lunch in the Reading Room.

13.40 – 15.10 Invited speakers: presentations and workshops.

- [Gemma Moore](#), Head of Evaluation at UCL – Campus-wide evaluation.
- Funder panel: Lewis Dean (UKRI); Becky Jones (Wellcome); Hazel McGraw (Scottish Funding Council). *Chair: Mhairi Stewart.*

Format: 20 mini-plenary for each session, followed by 45 minute breakout sessions in the Debates Chamber and Bridie Library.

15.10 – 15.30 Coffee mingle

15.30 – 16.00 Closing session including opportunity to shape future ScotPEN activity.

ScotPEN Social

16.00 – 18.00: Debates Chamber, Reading Room and Bridie Library.

- Drinks, crisps and conversation in the Reading Room bar (Basement Bar also open).
- Show and tell: "bring a thing" and posters in the Debates Chamber.
- Pre-booked surgery sessions in the Bridie Library with
 - Lewis Dean (UK Research and Innovation)
 - Heather Lusardi (NCCPE)
 - Becky Jones (Wellcome).

Recap and Update

Summarised by Barbara Gorgoni (University of Aberdeen) and Becky Hothersall (University of Glasgow)

Becky and Barbara gave a summary of some of ScotPEN's progress since its first annual meeting in Aberdeen in June 2017, where the priorities shown in the diagram below were identified.

Use the network to facilitate inter-institutional collaborations and funding opportunities

After introductions at the 2017 meeting

- Non-partner organisations joined Explorathon events.
- University of Aberdeen became part of the CellBlock Science (LINK) partnership.

Create a formal peer support group

- Website (point of contact; events).
- ScotPEN JISCmail group : 79 subscribers.

Facebook group: 448 members. Actively used for

- Peer support
- Sharing resources
- Virtual meet-ups
- Sharing learning (e.g. sessions summaries in "Engage 2017" chat group)
- Calls for collaboration and contributions
- Job ads

- Acting as contact point and dissemination platform (currently mainly via Facebook group).
- Members invited to St Andrews/Glasgow's seminar with Imran Khan (Wellcome) May 2018.
- Funders' Panel at today's meeting.

- Today's PEP meeting and ScotPEN Social evening.
- Exploring possible intersection with NCCPE PEP network.
- Steering group expanded to non-ISSF members (SRUC; Edinburgh Napier University).
- www.scotpen.org provides central contact point.

Increase awareness

ScotPEN



Priorities and progress

Share expertise, good practice and challenges

- Professional development: today's workshop on evaluation.

Align with funders' priorities and messages

Action: members are invited to join and contribute to the JISC and Facebook groups. If you want to advertise events or help develop content for the website, please contact the committee.

The Watermark Experience - Erin Hardee and Amy Cameron

School of Life Sciences, University of Dundee

Summarised by Erin Hardee

- Engage Watermark Award measures how embedded support for public engagement is within your faculty or institution.
- It doesn't directly measure the quality of the PE you do, though good support will be reflected in your activities and events.
- It's an intensive, multi-stage process that works best with support from admin and managerial staff.
- Needs engagement from senior management in several instances, including face-to-face interviews with NCCPE
- We learned a lot about our processes and team as we went through it; it was a great way to benchmark where we were and give us an action plan going forward
- Ongoing benefits to be determined; we've had recognition within the PE community but will it translate outside of that?



The NCCPE PEP Network

Summarised by Laura Steele

Paul Manners and Heather Lusardi presented draft proposals for the NCCPE's new Public Engagement Professionals Network (PEP Network). We have now updated our plans for the network based on useful feedback gained at the ScotPEN meeting and other regional events. In particular we have been able to subsidise 2018/19 membership costs (now £50 pp) and offer bursaries. We are actively working with the ScotPEN committee to ensure that our event programmes complement each other and that members can benefit from both offerings.

Find out more about the PEP Network and register for the 2018/19 year here:

<https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/pep-network>

Plenary and workshop: Evaluating Public Engagement

Led by Gemma Moore, Head of Evaluation at UCL; summarised by Barbara Gorgoni

Gemma started working at UCL during the Beacons for Public Engagement funding. She has two roles: evaluate the work of the PE unit and support researchers to evaluate their own PE activities. During the plenary session Gemma gave an overview of her journey to embed evaluation in UCL's PE work (for slides, see [Links and Resources](#)).

The starting point was to have clear public engagement aims and objectives. Evaluation is one of the key enabling activities that the PE team carries out to implement their aims. Embedding evaluation in PE is extremely challenging, so how do you start? Take **incremental steps** in a range of activities to advance the process from several angles:

- Enhance general understanding of evaluation: it's a critical, reflective practice
- Build skills and practice: start small and progress little by little; learn through practice.
- Encourage others to include evaluation in all their projects: to be awarded the enabling fund, evaluation has to be included in the plan.
- Provide structures and systems for monitoring and evaluation: set up a framework
- Find ways of creatively publishing evaluation findings
- Experiment and share failures!

Evaluation capacity building is essential:

“THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS SUSTAINABLE EVALUATION PRACTICE – WHERE MEMBERS CONTINUOUSLY ASK QUESTIONS THAT MATTER, COLLECT, ANALYSE AND INTERPRET DATA, AND USE EVALUATION FINDINGS FOR DECISION-MAKING AND ACTION.”

Preskill and Boyle (2008) American Journal of Evaluation, 29 (4), p443.

During the **break-out session**, we worked in groups to answer Gemma's four questions:

1. What experience do you have of evaluation/What do you think evaluation is?
2. What are your positive experiences of evaluation?
3. What are your negative experience of evaluation?
4. List 5 steps to evaluation

The participants came from different backgrounds and perspectives and this generated quite a varied and lively discussion. We produced a long list of answers and suggestions, which were collated by Gemma to create a ten-step guide to embedding evaluation into public engagement – see overleaf.

Gemma's take-home message was that there is already a wealth of expertise in the group and there may be specific actions we could take forward collectively within ScotPEN, e.g. sharing practice in the field of evaluation and possibly developing guidance or even a framework.

ScotPEN's 10 steps: embedding evaluation into our public engagement practice

Facilitated and summarised by Gemma Moore

We acknowledged that there was a wealth of evaluation experience in the room, from managing evaluation consultants, to planning and delivering the evaluation of specific events, to supporting the evaluation of large scale programmes. We agreed that evaluation, if approached and thought about in a certain way, can help us understand what we are doing and why, and ultimately inform our future practice. In summary we valued a critical, reflective, collaborative approach to evaluation.

These are our ten steps to embedding a critical, reflective, collaborative approach to evaluation into our public engagement practice.

- 1. Evaluation is integral to effective, meaningful engagement. Think about evaluation at the start of your project, programme or activity: the evaluative process can help to define the aims of the project.*
 - 2. Consider who needs to be involved - invite funders, partners, audiences, researchers and those you don't know into the process of evaluation.*
 - 3. Evaluation needs planned time and space for reflection: make that time to step back and reflect.*
 - 4. Clarify what the purpose of the evaluation is and what you are trying to achieve with the evaluation – as this will influence how you approach it.*
 - 5. You don't need to evaluate everything, but do something! Evaluation should be proportional to project.*
 - 6. Evaluation involves the development of a critical framework and this will help ensure you collect evidence and learning.*
 - 7. How will you use the information collected? Where does evaluation go? Make sure evaluation is shared and be creative about how your evaluation 'findings' are published (it doesn't always need to be a printed report).*
 - 8. We all love success stories, but the unexpected, unpredicted, failure and not knowing are part of the evaluation process.*
 - 9. No one size fits all. Think about what is appropriate and practical in terms of evaluation and the methods used – make sure your methods are timely, non-intrusive, creative and collect a range of information (ideally quantitative and qualitative).*
 - 10. Evaluation should lead to action. Make sure you act on the results!*
-

Funders' panel session

Summarised by Mhairi Stewart and Becky Hothersall

Our Panel:

- Lewis Dean, Programme Manager, UKRI
- Hazel McGraw, Policy/Analysis Officer, Scottish Funding Council
- Becky Jones, Research and Engagement Relationships Manager, Wellcome
- Chair: Mhairi Stewart, Head of PE, University of St Andrews

Each panellist gave short plenaries (see [Links and Resources](#)) before answering a selection of questions. These were informed by a thread on our Facebook page: 'What would YOU like to ask public engagement funders?' Their responses are outlined below.

[In a PER grant, what are the criteria for success from your point of view?](#)

- All panellists agreed that following call guidelines is the best advice. In addition Becky made a point regarding making activity exciting and meaningful for the audience, making sure they are integral to the design and delivery process, not simply passive audience to a final show. She also stated that it isn't always about the scale of an event; reaching new audiences and the impact on audience are also important. Hazel added to this that incorporating excellent, impactful research across the sector is important.

[The sustainability of well performing and valuable activities is a gap in the funding landscape and consequently many projects are falling away potentially due to a perception of lacking 'innovation'. What are your thoughts on this?](#)

- Becky made the point that the Wellcome PE funding does accept building on or expanding the scope of existing projects. A new audience is considered an innovation in these cases. In rare cases, supporting the status quo but exploring routes to sustainability could also be funded. In terms of Pathways to Impact (Ptol), Lewis thought that there may also be an issue of perception from the applicant's side, where they believe the same types of activity are being funded and so that is what they apply for, rather than tailoring the activity to their research.
- Hazel brought up the [University Innovation Fund](#) (UIF), and stated that many universities quote PER activity in their UIF submissions and are invited to discuss their public and cultural engagement strategies as part of the outcome agreement process. A question to the audience showed that all but two individuals were unaware of this and consequently had no input into the reporting— see [Closing session](#) summary and [Links and Resources](#) for more information.

[Do we need more accountability for PER in research grants, including reporting and evidence of success?](#)

- For UKRI, [Researchfish](#) is their main reporting tool , but the 'impact' section covers all areas of impact, so questions may not be tailored to public engagement. In terms of recording, the STFC have done some further work the results of which will be released later in the year. PER activity can be funded through Ptol, but there is acknowledgement that there is inconsistency in the way Ptol proposals are assessed between panels. It should be noted that research excellence is the primary criterion on

which grants are assessed. There is however scope to bring in more PE expertise to assessment by ensuring that panel members are familiar with best practice in PER. This is an area in which PEPs can work with researchers in their institutions to ensure that they are best equipped when they serve on review panels. If people have any specific concerns with PE in PtI they are encouraged to contact the UKRI PE team.

- Wellcome has a different problem. Their structure is different so the PE team has complete control over reviewing the PER funding in research grants and they provide rigorous constructive feedback regardless of status. The issue for them is ongoing assessment post-award and this is an area of development for them. A suggestion was made from the audience that PE professionals could in fact help in this area as members of expert panels.

How can funders' strategies, institutional strategies, and our practice be more synergistic? How can we really help each other?

- Hazel suggested accessibility to really good case studies of how funding has been used would be helpful. It was noted it is very difficult for us to know where UIF money has been used, however finding out if UIF funding levered UKRI applications would be helpful. She is interested in continuing conversations on how to get research, innovation and PE to be more prominent on the outcome agreements.
- Becky suggested that Wellcome want to be light touch and have the PE professionals, as the feet on the ground, to be the brokers for them in order to push change and capture evidence to feed back to Wellcome. This is a really useful realism check for funders: What from their visions will work, and how?
- Lewis encouraged our bottom-up influence influence with researchers in our universities who serve on panels and committees to complement the funders' PE teams' top-down approach.

Questions from the floor:

Will the NCCPE watermark ever work like Athena SWAN in that Universities will need an award in order to access funding? (Jen Scott – Aberdeen)

The consensus was this could work in theory, but we need to be aware of creating barriers. However, we should be using all the levers we can and PER is now part of the UKRI audit process.



Closing session - what next for ScotPEN?

Summarised by Becky Hothersall and Alina Loth

Previous group discussions had indicated that a priority for members is developing ScotPEN's visibility and voice. In our closing session we asked participants to discuss the following question.

"What areas of practice and which professional bodies should ScotPEN concentrate on influencing as a voice for PE in Scotland and why?"

Who?	General points	Specific suggestions and actions
Universities Scotland	To influence high level senior management	
UNIVERSITIES and Scottish Research Institutes	Generally, to gain recognition, support and funding for the network.	Greater co-ordination between PE roles and <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduate schools (AHRC, ESRC, EPSRC/Doctoral training centres) → embed PE in early career researchers' training.• Central comms teams.
FUNDERS and panel members	To help ensure money is available for engagement and get involved with quality assurance of Pathways to Impact. Build stronger links with Scottish Funding Council.	SFC: make the case for the value of PE work e.g. articulate how ScotPEN activity aligns with SFC's University Innovation Fund (UIF) Outcomes (especially Outcome Six: inclusive growth and social impact). Discuss UIF funding and possibility of SFC financial support for ScotPEN to run CPD/PE activities for all disciplines. <div style="background-color: #e0f2ff; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"><p>ACTION: Becky Hothersall to liaise with Stirling University, who are leading a group exploring UIF Outcome Six. Becky will report back to ScotPEN. See Links and Resources on UIF submission.</p></div>
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT	Investigate opportunities to tap into education funding. - SPICe	

LEARNED SOCIETIES	Help ensure money is more evenly spread Opportunities to influence researchers.	A future ScotPEN meeting could invite learned societies for a discussion on collaboration. ACTION: ScotPEN committee to explore.
ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH'S YOUNG ACADEMY	To access funding, and to give evidence for funders/parliament/government consultations.	Individuals to explore membership: various YA strategic themes have PE strands (e.g. Researchtheheadlines.org) and members are eligible for RSE public engagement medals.
NCCPE	Explore relationships and synergies between PEPs networks; feed into consultations (as above)	ACTION: NCCPE and ScotPEN committee will discuss scope for future shared opportunities.
Other bodies to interact with or raise awareness of Creative Scotland; Carnegie Trust; Education Scotland; Ask@academia JISC mail; Industry bodies: RSE; IoP Scotland; Research Pools/Innovation Centres; Science Centres and Museums.		
<p>Comments about formalising ScotPEN</p> <p>Groups noted that formalising the network, creating internal governance structures and having a “face” will assure these groups that ScotPEN has a mandate. Becoming a professional membership body might increase our influence within our organisations/institutions). Agreements with SFC could be used to raise the profile of ScotPEN.</p> <p>ACTION: the ScotPEN committee intends to explore models for formalising the network and will consult members about developments – watch out for updates via the Facebook group and JISC list over autumn/winter 2018.</p>		



ScotPEN social

Summarised by Mhairi Stewart

Our PEPs' meeting was followed by an early evening social open to all ScotPEN members. The evening brought together individuals from science centres, museums, freelancers (in science communication and in exhibition building), engaged researchers, and senior university managers. Many contacts were made and networks built over the course of the evening. Some of these we know have been followed up on through our Facebook pages or individually and it was evident that everyone enjoyed the social event with many of you commenting on how beneficial it was. Thank you to everyone who came along.

Feedback

Summarised by Becky Hothersall

Comments on post-it notes were invited on the day and also in a follow-up feedback survey. The headings suggested were Format, Content, Future Topics and Any other comments. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive – here are some examples.

Common sentiments

Format worked well Diverse but relevant sessions

Mini plenaries and breakout workshops worked well

Funder session really useful Will apply learning from today

Informative and worthwhile having external speakers

Evaluation session appreciated

Networking enjoyable and valuable

Left wanting more!

Future topics

Learning from project partners PE linked to teaching

Social science for evaluation More evaluation

Sharing failures/lessons learnt CPD for PEPs

Senior buy-in REF/Impact Updates from funders

Interacting with/influencing learned societies

Community engagement: engaging/best practice; evaluating

Local and central PE teams – how to work together

Effective internal networks

Getting big PE events to come to Scotland (BSA, Royal Society)

Links and Resources

Speakers' slides

Slides from several of our speakers' presentations are available in the Files sections of the ScotPEN [Facebook group](#) and [JISC list](#). If you do not have access to either of these, please email myls-engage@glasgow.ac.uk to request a copy.

ScotPEN website: www.scotpen.org

ScotPEN Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/ScotPEN

ScotPEN JISC list: <https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?Ao=SCOTPEN>

Wellcome's recent blogs and guide cover many of the points discussed in our funder panel:
<https://wellcome.ac.uk/news/what-were-looking-public-engagement-fund-applications>

<https://wellcome.ac.uk/sites/default/files/public-engagement-fund-what-good-proposals-look-like.pdf>

<https://wellcome.ac.uk/news/public-engagement-its-fantastic-research-how-feasible-it-you>

Information on **UKRI's** strategic aim around delivering social and cultural impact can be found at: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/strategic-prospectus/>

For those interested in seeing what their institutions did or didn't say about public engagement in their **Scottish Funding Council** Universities Innovation Fund submissions and the Outcome Agreements:

17/18 Outcome Agreements

<http://www.sfc.ac.uk/funding/outcome-agreements/outcome-agreements-listing.aspx?Search=&Type=&Sector=&From=dd/mm/yyyy&To=dd/mm/yyyy&YearFilter=2017> (18/19 outcome agreements will be published soon)

17/18 Universities Innovation Fund submissions

<http://www.sfc.ac.uk/funding/university-funding/university-funding-innovation/university-innovation-funding.aspx> (18/19 submissions will be combined with the outcome agreements).

