Public Engagement & Impact Team
Research & Innovation Services
Summary Report 2012–15
In 2012, the University of Sheffield created the Public Engagement & Impact Team following a successful application to the Research Councils UK (RCUK) for a Public Engagement with Research Catalyst grant. The University’s ambition was to effect cultural change, so that researchers at all levels could contribute to public engagement and those who do so could expect their efforts to be recognised and celebrated. As a civic university – a university founded for and by the people of its city – our research priorities should reflect widely shared societal goals; this cannot be done without deeply embedded public engagement.

To achieve this, the main aims of the project were to champion public engagement throughout the institution, create further opportunities for public engagement and support academics at all career stages with training to undertake successful public engagement.

Many activities have been undertaken over the past three years. These have included reviewing the reward and recognition of public engagement, establishing the masterclass training programmes, developing a mentoring programme by academic public engagement champions and increasing the opportunities for researchers to connect with the public at events, such as Festival of the Mind, Mobile University, Sheffield Festival of Science & Engineering, Life Festival, Off the Shelf, Doc/Fest and Festival of Social Science.

Through a combination of leadership from the highest levels in reviewing institutional practices and process, and from the Team in providing practical support for academics to take their research out to the general public, public engagement activity has greatly increased and become highly visible in the University.

The case studies and festivals in this report demonstrate just some of the exciting and innovative public engagement work that has been undertaken by the University’s researchers. The University’s distinctiveness has been to work in collaborative partnerships and identify mutually beneficial opportunities with the city, cementing a partnership approach. By doing this, our engagement work has added economic, social and cultural value to the city and region, and reflects our values as a civic university.

Public Engagement Catalyst Principal Investigators

Professor Richard Jones
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research & Innovation

Professor Tony Ryan
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Faculty of Science

Professor Vanessa Toulmin
Director of City & Cultural Engagement
The Team has delivered 13 festivals and 7 single events since its creation.

All events have been well received by the public with 27,182 people attending Festival of the Mind alone in 2014.

The total number of visitors to all our events is 60,468.

The Team has worked with over 700 individual staff.

- **498** academic
- **245** non-academic

Over 700 individuals (staff and postgraduate students) have attended.

- **20** public engagement masterclasses with over 1,000 attendances

The average audience size is 55 people. Approximately 65% of attendees are staff.

Engagement by Numbers

**Festival of the Mind 2014 Evaluation Statistics**

- **95%** of academics taking part in Festival of the Mind rated the Public Engagement & Impact Team's support as excellent or very good.
- **84%** of academics agreed or strongly agreed they had gained new skills from taking part in Festival of the Mind.
- **99%** of academics said Festival of the Mind had enabled them to demonstrate their research in a different way.
- **65%** of academics said that involving the public had positively influenced their own thinking about their research.
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Thermal Imaging of Sheffield’s Buildings

A team of researchers from the Faculty of Engineering, including Dr. Grant Wilson of the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering, and Dr. Abigail Hathway and colleagues from the Department of Civil and Structural Engineering, joined forces with the Sustainable Development Service at Sheffield City Council to create a project for Festival of the Mind 2014.

Dr. Wilson and his collaborators used thermal imaging to enable people to visualise the heat loss of some of Sheffield’s iconic buildings including Sheffield City Hall, Sheffield Town Hall and the University of Sheffield’s Arts Tower.

The objective of the project was to create greater public awareness of the heat loss of buildings, and highlight the potential interventions available to building owners to reduce heat loss.

The project culminated in a stunning large-format image exhibition at Castle House for the duration of the festival, and an interactive talk with an expert panel in the Spiegeltent.

A follow on project to continue this interest in heat loss is being discussed – which if successful, could eventually lead to Sheffield being the most ‘thermally aware’ city in the country.

CASE STUDIES

Sounds of the Cosmos

Sounds of the Cosmos was a unique collaboration between Stewart Campbell from the Department of Music, Professor Paul Crowther and colleagues from the Department of Physics & Astronomy, and creative partners Human and Sheffield Rep. Orchestra.

This Festival of the Mind 2014 project saw breathtaking performances in the Octagon of Gustav Holst’s The Planets combined with stunning visuals of real-life space imagery. The musical performances were interspersed with short talks sharing information, facts and figures about the incredible cosmos that surrounds us.

A special matinee performance was held for local schoolchildren and was accompanied by workshops on comets, aliens and lights, along with a ‘Seeing the Universe’ hands-on exhibit.

The performances at the Octagon were attended by a total of 1350 people, and received fantastic feedback. The videos of the event were chosen to be shown on the homepage of iTunes U – receiving over 31,000 views.

“Sounds of the Cosmos has now been selected to be performed again at the Crucible in June 2015 as part of Sheffield International Documentary Film Festival (Doc/Fest), with additional funding from the Science & Technology Facilities Council.

“The music was wonderful, it was really impressive and really complemented the facts that were being shared.”

– Audience feedback
The University is home to two fantastic museums which the Team have supported to open their doors to the public.

The Alfred Denny Museum is curated by Professor Tim Birkhead from the Department of Animal & Plant Sciences. It contains many zoological treasures including venomous jellies, pre-historic fish fossils and a 3-metre tall ostrich. The museum was opened to the public for the first time as part of Festival of the Mind 2012 and proved incredibly popular.

Following this success, the museum now opens on the first Saturday of every month for guided visits, and has had extra openings as part of Sheffield Festival of Science & Engineering 2013 and Festival of the Mind 2014.

The Turner Museum of Glass is curated by Emeritus Professor John Parker from the Department of Materials Science & Engineering. It offers one of the UK’s most lobomening collections of 19th and 20th century glass and celebrates the skill and artistry of glassmakem. The museum opened to the public as part of Festival of the Mind 2014 and included hot glass demonstrations hosted in a departmental laboratory.

Computer Love was a collaboration between the Department of Computer Science at the University of Sheffield and Human, a creative design agency in Sheffield. Computer Love takes the form of a virtual gallery space, curated by Nick Bax at Human and built using the Unity game engine and Cinema 4D. Two versions of Computer Love were exhibited at the University’s Festival of the Mind in 2012 and 2014. The academics leading the project were Dr Steve Maddock and Professor Guy Brown.

The Turner Museum of Glass & Alfred Denny Museum

Professor Allan Pacey has been involved in many of his own public engagement initiatives through his pioneering research into male fertility and andrology. For the Festival of the Mind 2014, Professor Pacey provided the introduction to the film Codebreaker about computer genius Alan Turing whose work saved millions of lives in World War II and laid the foundations of computer science and artificial intelligence. Due to discrimination because of his sexuality, a man who should have become a national hero was convicted of committing acts of homosexuality and by way of punishment was subjected to chemical castration by the state. Turing ultimately took his own life.

Professor Pacey interviewed director Patrick Sammon to discuss the making of the film and enlightened the audience on the physical and emotional changes that Turing would have experienced during the brutal process of chemical castration. In his own field of research Professor Pacey is an expert in male fertility and later in the evening delivered the X-lecture, “The Secret Life of Sperm.”
As part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science 2014 on two dark nights in November in Sheffield, huge images of older women appeared on some of the city’s most famous buildings. Kathleen and Eleanor in big hair and sunglasses, covered the City Hall. Jill’s wrinkles, teeth and grey hair were beamed onto the side of the Town Hall. Shirley, taking off her wig, featured on the side of Central Library in Tudor Square.

These images were from the Look At Me! project led by Dr Lorna Warren from the Department of Sociology at the University of Sheffield. The aim of the project was to examine the stereotypical way older women are portrayed in the media, if, indeed, they are visible at all. Dr Warren and a team of other researchers explored these issues with women aged from 41–93 across Sheffield who then produced their own images capturing their experiences of ageing.

The project featured on BBC Radio Sheffield as passers-by were interviewed by presenter Paulette Edwards to capture their reactions to the images of the women projected onto city centre monuments. A debate was held the next day on the radio between Dr Lorna Warren, Judith Holder (producer of the Grumpy Old Women TV series) and Paulette Edwaits to discuss older women’s representation in the media.

A participant in the public engagement masterclass programme and a speaker at the Mobile University in 2013, Dr Warren’s public engagement activities in the last few years have taken a trajectory that has seen her Look At Me! project achieve new heights through engagement with bigger and wider audiences.

Dr Catherine Fletcher, Lecturer in Public History, joined the University of Sheffield in September 2012. Since then she has engaged the public with her fascinating research into the Renaissance and early modern Europe in a variety of exciting ways. Her book, The Divorce of Henry VIII has been published in paperback by Bodley Head in the UK and Palgrave Macmillan in the US. The book has received international and literary acclaim including being called “A glittering debut.” – Miranda Seymour, The Sunday Times.

Dr Fletcher’s local profile has been raised through her participation in a headline event at Off the Shelf festival of words in October 2013 where she spoke to a sell-out audience. Nationally she has been a guest on two editions of BBC Radio 4’s In Our Time: The Borgias (2012) and The House of Medici (2013) and contributed to the Radio 4 series The Invention of Italy (2013).

Dr Fletcher has recently worked as an expert advisor to the BBC Television adaptation of Hilary Mantel’s Booker Prize winning novels Wolf Hall and Bring up the Bodies, already being hailed as possibly “the greatest period drama ever made” – Christopher Stevens, The Mail Online. Her work around the show has been featured in the Sunday Telegraph and Daily Mail.

“I’ve been really impressed by the opportunities for innovative public engagement work at Sheffield. As I’ve presented my work-in-progress to everyone from student interns to documentary producers to partygoers I’ve been prompted to think about new aspects of the history I’m researching, and new ways to communicate it.” – Dr Catherine Fletcher

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For Festival of the Mind 2012 engineer and scientist Dr Jonathan Howse and Rotherham-based artist Mark Fell collaborated on an art installation that used a custom made optical microscope to track the movement of particles, producing synthetic sound played back over a series of loudspeakers. This art-science collaboration was installed at the creative artspace CADS in Sheffield and proved an immensely popular exhibition during the festival, attracting international media attention, including coverage on BBC’s Today programme and the BBC science web pages.

Dr Howse and Mark Fell collaborated again in 2014 to produce another spectacular Festival of the Mind project. This time, Dr Annette Taylor from the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering joined the team and the trio turned the University of Sheffield’s Arts Tower into a 255-foot art installation that used computer controlled lighting to display simulations of complex chemical reactions. The lights were displayed on the outside of the building, which could be seen across the city.

The Festival of the Mind has enabled many opportunities for artistic collaboration between academics and creative organisations. One very successful example is the partnership between Professor Dawn Hadley from the Department of Archaeology and Point Blank theatre company. For Festival of the Mind 2012, the team created the play All Sorts of Wickedness, about 19th century life at Sheffield Manor Lodge. The play was performed in the Spiegeltent to an audience of over 250 people over two nights. It was also subsequently performed at the Arts and Humanities Research Council Connected Communities showcase event in Edinburgh in July 2013 as an example of excellent public engagement.

For Festival of the Mind 2014, Professor Hadley worked with Point Blank again, this time to develop a companion piece about late 19th century Sheffield showman Harvey Teasdale. Based on his autobiography, ‘The Life and Adventures of Harvey Teasdale, the converted clown and man-monkey’, the play explored Teasdale’s career as a performer in the working-class pubs of mid/late 19th century Sheffield. The play was performed to an audience of 295 people to excellent reviews. In bringing Sheffield history to life, both projects exemplify great collaborative academic/creative relationships and the legacy that can come from a web-timed connection. The Harvey Teasdale performance has subsequently become the recipient of an Arts Council touring grant of £12,651, ensuring even greater added value and legacy for Festival of the Mind and the project itself.

“As an academic our research can be insular; happy in our own private world of wonder. Festival of the Mind is a unique opportunity to be part of something much bigger - with the whole being more than the sum of the parts. We trusted the team to use their expertise to connect us with the right contacts and resources so that a much wider section of the public could access this world of ours.”

– Dr Jonathan Howse
**FESTIVALS**

**Ideas Bazaar**

*Held in September 2011 and September 2013*

The Ideas Bazaar was held for Sheffield's creative community to come together, meet one another and share ideas. The University played matchmaker to bring academics from across the faculties together with creative practitioners from the city so that they could create projects that would be showcased the following year at the Festival of the Mind.

The team ran the Ideas Bazaar events in both September 2011 and September 2013. At the first Ideas Bazaar over 450 people attended. In 2013, 400 people attended and 26 organisations/individuals exhibited at Firth Court at the University of Sheffield.

Over the two festivals, more than £270,000 of funding has been awarded to develop innovative performances, exhibitions, talks and demonstrations, showcasing the University’s cutting-edge research.

**Festival of the Mind**

20–30 September 2012
18–28 September 2014

The Festival of the Mind began in 2012 as a biennial festival to invite academics from across all faculties of the University to team up with professionals from Sheffield’s creative and digital industries to bring their research to life in exciting, entertaining and innovative ways.

The Festival of the Mind was open to everyone – the general public (of all ages), academic colleagues and creative professionals. Many events were held off campus in the city centre to break down barriers to engagement.

### Themes

**2012**
- Magic, Space, Identity, City and Craft

**2014**
- Change, Chaos, Global, Joy, Resilience and Urban

### Funded projects

**2012**
- 50 projects – a further 25 projects were also included

**2014**
- 70 projects – a further 30 events were also included

### Venues

**2012**
- 25 city venues and 4 in the University. Spiegeltent in Barker’s Pool.

**2014**
- 7 city venues and 5 in the University. Spiegeltent in Barker’s Pool and Castle House on Angell Street.

### Number of events programmed

**2012**
- Total of 150 events

**2014**
- Total of 354 events

### Exhibitions and installations

**2012**
- 13 in 11 different locations, including CADS, Montgomery Hall, Firth Court, Sheffield Cathedral, Winter Gardens, Meadowhall, Sheffield Train Station.

**2014**
- Castle House hosted the Sheffield Bazaar – 20 art commissions funded by Arts Council England. It also featured 10 pop up shops inspired by the National Fairground Archive’s 20th anniversary.

### Academics involved

**2012**
- 40 academics

**2014**
- 150 academics

### Press coverage

**2012**
- 91 pieces including 5 international

**2014**
- 92 pieces including 17 international

### Social media

**2012**
- Twitter followers 916
- Facebook likes 670

**2014**
- Twitter followers 3,027
- Facebook likes 1,348

### Total distributed project funding

**2012**
- £122,640

**2014**
- £149,655 plus £20,000 for Sheffield Bazaar

### Total number of attendees

**2012**
- 18,000 people attended

**2014**
- 27,182 people visited Festival of the Mind in 2014, a 51% increase on visitor numbers to the 2012 Festival

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**“A big pay off for little effort… a very very productive few hours”**

– Academic feedback

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Sheffield Festival of Science & Engineering

- Collaboration between the University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University and regional partners
- Timed to coincide with National Science & Engineering Week, 10–24 March 2013
- Engaged with 4,000 people through the public programme

Sheffield Festival of Science & Engineering aimed to celebrate and showcase achievement in science and engineering research in Sheffield and South Yorkshire. It built upon the success of the 2012 joint event organised as part of National Science & Engineering Week.

The festival was split into the schools programme and the public programme. The schools programme was more successful than ever with over 150 events delivered across South Yorkshire. The general public programme contained 50 lectures, in-conversation events, workshops and exhibitions. Festival events took place in schools, colleges, libraries, museums and in private sector businesses as well as on campus at both universities.

A key event was Discovery Night where the University opened its laboratories and lecture theatres to the public for an evening of fun events for the whole family. It was attended by approximately 1,000 people and featured on BBC Look North.

ESRC Festival of Social Science

- National annual festival of ESRC funded projects during 1–8 November 2014
- Biggest festival of social science outside of London
- Partnership festival with Sheffield Hallam University

The Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) Festival of Social Science is a national festival for the public to engage with leading experts on the social issues that matter – from economics to urban planning and the law. Social science affects us all. Building year on year, 38 events were held over the week-long programme in venues across the city from Weston Park museum to the former Woolworth’s store on the Moor. Nine schools-only events were held for young people interested in topics such as enterprise and architecture. Events ranged from a public debate to interactive workshops and seminars for professionals in a specific field such as charity law or heritage.

Sheffield’s Festival of Social Science is considered by the ESRC to be one of the best examples in the country for reaching new audiences and communicating the brand and message.

“Great idea and great for engagement with the community” – Audience feedback

“We’ve had a wonderful time, and have spent 3 hours utterly mesmerised and fully absorbed by the activities and opportunities for engagement and learning.” – Parent feedback
Mobile University

- 30 free, public lectures delivered on a vintage bus
- Held over a weekend 27–29 September 2013
- Engaged with over 1,000 people

The Mobile University provided a platform for researchers to deliver a 20-minute talk about their work to a public audience in the heart of the city centre. There was a deliberate attempt to include some of the more challenging, innovative and controversial research topics, such as stem cells, miscarriages of justice and the disposal of radioactive waste.

"Never realised nanoparticles could be explained so quickly and simply!" – Adam, audience member

Life: A festival of health, from head to toe

- The first Life festival took place 19-24 May 2014
- Engaged 2,300 attendees
- 40 academics involved in 42 events
- Life festival was launched in 2014 to celebrate the work that the University’s medicine, dentistry and health researchers are doing to improve people’s lives. The events included lectures, film screenings, panel discussions, interactive workshops, tours of hospital facilities, hands-on activities, health checks and an exercise bootcamp. The launch event on Monday 19 May – An Audience with Dr Dawn Harper from Embarrassing Bodies – attracted a great deal of public interest and provided an opportunity to promote the rest of the festival. It was timed to coincide with International Clinical Trials Day on 20 May and included tours of the Clinical Research Facility at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital.

The activities took place around the University campus, in Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Weston Park and in the city centre. Funding was received from the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health and the Welcome Trust. The festival was featured in Times Higher Education, University Business, Yorkshire Post, Sheffield Telegraph, Sheffield Star and on Radio Sheffield.

"Gives me ideas on dissemination of research output beyond the standard academic venues." – Academic feedback

"Great - loved the bus, loved the science. More please!" – Abi, audience member
Off the Shelf is Sheffield’s annual festival of words and
is run by Sheffield City Council events team. Now in its
22nd year, the festival has grown into one of the UK's
most popular and exciting events attracting some of
the best-known names in literature and the media. The
festival offers a wide range of events for audiences of
all ages including readings, workshops, storytelling,
exhibitions, walks, poetry and more.

The University of Sheffield became a silver sponsor in
2013, to create a platform for academics to speak to
the public about their latest book or research paper.
The 2013 programme saw the creation of Ideas
Alive at 5.45pm, a free one-hour talk for members of
the public. These proved very popular. There were
10 events that were held in the Showroom bar to
encourage an informal atmosphere. Additionally
there were five paid events where high-profile
academics spoke

Off the Shelf has provided a platform for academics
across the University to engage the public with
their research, with talks from historians, computer
scientists, physicists, engineers, biologists, sociologists and
linguists.

Sheffield International Documentary Film Festival
• One of the top 3 documentary film festivals in
the world
• Takes place annually in Sheffield in June
• Attended by over 3,200 film, TV and digital
industry delegates

The Team has worked in partnership with Sheffield
International Documentary Film Festival (Doc/Fest)
during 2013 and 2014 to provide academics with
the opportunity to meet producers and discuss the
potential for their research to be translated into a
documentary. Each year the Team organised two
events, one in March and one during Doc/Fest in June.
The March events had a speed-dating format in
which 15 academics and 15 documentary makers met
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documentary decision makers and a large audience of
Doc/Fest delegates.

Following the events, a number of academics
had ongoing conversations with producers including
writing TV treatments and investigating
fundraising opportunities to produce a feature-length
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2015 sees the partnership embedded throughout
the Doc/Fest programme. From the opening show
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with University academics to the performance of Sounds
of the Cosmos at the Crucible Theatre.

“I loved it and I think that featuring and enabling
this kind of collaboration is really important and
very welcome for those who are unsure about how
to bridge the gap.” – Producer feedback

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during 2013 and 2014 to provide academics with
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potential for their research to be translated into a
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events, one in March and one during Doc/Fest in June.
The March events had a speed-dating format in
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Since February 2013, the Team has run 20 public engagement masterclasses on a range of subjects. The sessions are designed to equip staff with all the skills they need to undertake successful public engagement events. The programme was developed following feedback from the Public Engagement Symposium in 2011 and information gathered as part of the RCUK Catalyst application.

The subjects range from how to organise an event, write a risk assessment or event promotion to the more detailed topic areas such as communicating with non-specialist audiences and engaging with stakeholders and partners. The sessions are usually chaired by an internal specialist and include an external speaker to give practical examples.

There is also typically an opportunity for attendees to do some practical work and network and discuss their ideas with colleagues.

The masterclasses have been well attended with over 1000 attendances in 20 sessions. Feedback and evaluation of the masterclasses is always undertaken so that learning by attendees can be tracked and the future of the masterclass programme developed to ensure it remains relevant to attendees’ needs.

The Public Engagement & Impact Team have identified a series of champions and worked closely with them over the last three years. The champions are academics who have significant experience and profile in undertaking public engagement events and activities. This network provides leadership and knowledge dissemination, with the champions using their expertise to mentor early career academics and promote the benefits of public engagement to a wider audience.

Beyond this, the Team are working closely with Human Resources to ensure public engagement is recognised and embedded into relevant role reviews, the annual appraisal process, promotion criteria and in new job descriptions. Recently, exemplary public engagement work has contributed to a number of promotions at the University.

These combined actions underline the University’s commitment to all types of public engagement, whether research or teaching led, and to ensuring that academics get the support they need to deliver engagement activities.

At the University of Sheffield, reward and recognition is an important way of demonstrating to staff and students that public engagement activity is valued. Over the last few years, there has been a major shift in the expectations of the UK’s main research funders for universities to incorporate public engagement and to include it in their research proposals from the outset.

One of the four key principles of the major research councils is that ‘researchers are recognised and valued for their involvement with public engagement activities.’

Public engagement has been written into the University of Sheffield strategic plan 2015–20, and is being championed at senior leadership level by Professor Richard Jones, Professor Vanessa Toulmin and Professor Tony Ryan.

The masterclass topics are:
1. Organising your public engagement activity
2. Working in partnership with others
3. Public engagement: understanding participation or subvert it?
4. Keeping public engaged by research
5. Values, incentives and motivations
6. Writing a funding application and outline
7. Writing a risk assessment for public engagement
8. Working with the media and social media
9. How to identify, approach and work with stakeholders
10. How to communicate public engagement
11. The Media and The Conversation
12. Grant writing and impact
13. Engaging the public in research and different types of engagement
14. How to communicate your work
15. Storytelling in public engagement

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Evaluation

All the public engagement events organised by the Team are fully evaluated. Feedback is sought from the audience, staff, students, volunteers and partners involved in the event.

One of the key measures is whether the audience has learnt anything new as a result of attending and whether attending has affected their impression of the University. This is driven by the Catalyst project objective to change the hearts and minds of the people of Sheffield. For staff, students, partners and volunteers, the focus is on how the Team has supported the event and whether this could be improved in the future.

A variety of methods have been used to collect qualitative and quantitative information such as feedback postcards, iPad surveys, audience response systems and comment books.

During the RCUK Catalyst Project, the Team has worked in collaboration with an external evaluation company. The aim of this has been to gather impartial feedback on the views of staff, partners and members of the public about public engagement events and the support offered by the Team. The resulting evaluation data will help to inform the University’s future public engagement strategy and support.

“The way we worked together last year was really mutually beneficial.”
– Partner feedback
The Public Engagement & Impact Team has collaborated with and supported the Engaged University programme. This initiative is about applying the University's expertise in a local context; working with Sheffield City Council and other key city partners on projects which will directly impact on the local area. Activity broadly falls under cultural engagement, the green environment and urban development.

The Engaged University helps to connect local with global research and practice: under the urban development strand, the University hosted a week-long visit by internationally-recognised regeneration expert, Marcus Westbury, to share experiences of bringing empty premises in Australia back into temporary use (also known as ‘meanwhile use’) to transform city centres.

Under the green environment, the University hosted a visit from Los Angeles’ inspirational ‘gangsta gardener’ Ron Finley, who shared his message of direct action in planting on neglected land. Ron delivered a public lecture and met with a number of community groups in Sheffield, providing inspiration and impetus for Sheffield in cultivating non-traditional planting spaces. This linked in with the Engaged University’s Love Square project, which aims to create an innovative and beautiful urban eco-park in the city centre, drawing on research from the Department of Landscape.

“The University of Sheffield is very good in communicating and organising events that are accessible, informative and educative to the local community and public. Good to see a joint event with Sheffield Council. Keep up the good work.”

- Audience feedback
In 2012 the University of Sheffield received investment from RCUK to fund core events, training and a dedicated public engagement team for three years, as part of the RCUK Public Engagement with Research Catalyst project.

The University of Sheffield also provided funding through the Higher Education Innovation Fund and core funds for public engagement activity, demonstrating the University’s commitment to this area of work and adding value to the local region.

The Team has also secured investment from other external funders, including the Wellcome Trust, Arts Council England, the Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Science & Technology Facilities Council (STFC) which has enabled the University to develop and implement further public engagement activity over the past three years.

From 2015, the University has committed to support the Public Engagement & Impact Team, which now sits in Research & Innovation Services, with academic leadership from Professor Vanessa Toulmin.

The Public Engagement & Impact Team would like to take the opportunity to thank all the investors and partners for their support.

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With the RCUK Catalyst Project ending in March 2015, the University has demonstrated its ongoing commitment to public engagement by providing funding for the Public Engagement & Impact Team to continue as part of Research & Innovation Services.

With the expansion of the Team, there is now a dedicated person to support each Faculty. Over the next three years, the Team will work with academic colleagues to help increase funding for public engagement activities through research bids and continue to deliver high-quality public engagement platforms, maximising the potential for partnerships and collaborations with the city.

As an Engaged University, our mission is to take Sheffield’s world-class research and explore the opportunities for engagement and impact locally, nationally and internationally.

Professor Vanessa Toulmin
Director of City & Cultural Engagement