

'The Engaged Researcher' Training Programme

Evaluation Report 2020

Engaged researcher training



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ABBREVIATIONS

ECR	Early career researcher
MRC	Medical Research Council
NCCPE	National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement
PE	Public engagement
PER	Public engagement with research
RCUK	Research Council UK
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RRI	Responsible Research and Innovation
UTBS	University Training Booking System

Introduction

Public engagement with research allows the sharing of experience and perspectives, providing new insights and ideas, and ultimately improving research in ways that would not have been possible without this collaboration. The National Centre Coordinating Public Engagement (NCCPE) describes public engagement as; “*... the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit.*” They can include “*outreach, patient-involvement, collaborative research, citizen science, participatory arts, lifelong learning, community engagement, and engagement with partners.*” As well as recognising that universities carry out engagement with other forms of community-based learning, such as widening participation programmes.

Over the last decade there has been an increasing recognition of the benefits and a formalising of the role of public engagement with research (PER). In 2010 a group of UK funders developed The Concordat for Public Engagement (RCUK, 2010), which outlined their expectations that institutions develop engagement strategies, place value on engagement activities and provide training, support and opportunities for researchers to be involved in engagement. Analysis has shown that the Concordat has shaped both policy and practice, although this varies widely across institutions (Mellors-Bourne, 2017). Since 2014 the Research Excellence Framework (REF) has asked for impact statements, with nearly half of case studies reporting some form of PER in REF 2014 (Duncan, 2017).

This shift has also led to a stronger recognition and formalising of the skills needed by researchers for public engagement. Vitae includes a range of engagement skills within their Researcher Development Framework (Vitae, 2011) and have also developed a specific a ‘Lens on Public Engagement’ in conjunction with the NCCPE, which encompasses a more in depth skills for engagement (Vitae, 2012).

Work by RCUK and Wellcome has identified that the majority of researchers (82%) across all fields reported taking part in some form of public engagement in the last 12 months (TNS-BMRB, 2015). Over half (58%) of researchers felt it was important and 53% reported they wanted to spend more time doing public engagement. If selecting the most important aspects of engagement researchers most often chose aspects that were of benefit to wider society, such as informing the public, ensuring research is relevant and maintaining public support for research, ahead of personal benefits such as career or personal enjoyment (TNS-BMRB, 2015). However, those taking part in engagement often report it is highly rewarding, it can be a fun and emotionally rich experience, and is often inspiring to see their work with fresh eyes, as well as providing a range of professional skills which are useful in both research and wider life (Cerrato, 2018).

There are however a range of barriers for researchers in taking part, ranging from practical aspects such as time, competing interests and limited support from supervisors, as well personal barriers such as lack of skills or experience (Cerrato, 2018). Researchers who report they have received engagement training, and those who consider themselves well equipped in public engagement skills, report being more active in engagement. (TNS-BMRB, 2015).

Within the UK there continues to be a gradual increase in the amount of continuing professional development (CPD) training for researchers and this is also reflected in an increase in the proportion reporting public engagement training: Around a quarter of researchers reported having received public engagement training within the last 5 years(TNS-BMRB, 2015), with around half reporting they would like to take up engagement training (Mellors-Bourne, 2017). A quarter of researchers reported a lack of opportunities as a barrier to taking part in more PE, researchers want both engagement training and opportunities to put their skills into practice (TNS-BMRB, 2015).

It should be noted that around 11% of researchers felt public engagement was not relevant for them. There were a range of reasons cited, some felt their research field was too specialised or did not have direct impacts on society. Others felt unwilling to take a public stance on their research. Some reported they did not feel the public could add value to their research, or that there was no personal benefit to being involved with public engagement, or that they did not feel a moral obligation to carry out public engagement (TNS-BMRB, 2015). There is therefore a need to inform and encourage these ‘unengaged’ researchers to see the value of being involved with PER, perhaps by via better promotion and targeting of training. For example, to demonstrate that engagement skills may benefit researchers in other areas, not just their research but for future careers and their life outside of research. Including engagement training as part of researcher professional development is key, so it becomes part of a wider skills set and normalises engagement as part of wider researcher training. Engagement training should be recognised as an important element of transferable skills that will be relevant within an academic career and beyond academia.

The key aim of the University of Cambridge ‘Engaged Researcher’ programme is to enable early career researchers to plan, develop and evaluate meaningful public engagement, that benefits the specific audience. The programme is aimed at all early career researchers, as well as being open to professional and support staff within the University. The sessions are designed to give participants the support to organise, develop, deliver, communicate, publish and evaluate public engagement activities.

During 2020 the training was adapted to be able to offer the training online, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The format of the courses was developed into week-long

online workshops, which allowed participants to work in their own time, between the training, mentoring and hands on activities. These courses could be booked as individual stand-alone courses, or participants could gain a ‘Certificate in Online Public Engagement with Research’ by undertaking the course on ‘Online Public Engagement’ along with any other three courses from the series, allowing them to choose the training that best meets their training needs.

Methods

The report pooled data from the existing feedback forms collected for the academic years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. In the first part of the academic year from October 2019 to March 2020 evaluation forms (Appendix 1), which included pre-training and post-training questions, were handed out and collected in person. From March 2020 the courses moved online due to the Covid-19 pandemic, so the evaluation forms became electronic. Data from both in person and online training are be included within the report. All courses are routinely evaluated as individual courses, but this report will focus on the wider programme.

The report sought evidence about the format of the current courses, as well as gathering information about how the courses met participant expectations and learning needs:

- Logistical aspects, scheduling, duration, location and facilities to identify any barriers to participation and where these aspects can be improved to increase attendance.
- Information on motivation for seeking training and identify common themes. Motivation and learning needs can help improve not only the programme itself but also how best to target future promotion.
- Identify if the courses met the personal development needs of early career researchers.
- Identify if researchers need additional support to maximise the learning and increase confidence.
- Benchmark the ER programme against wider funder expectations, as well as current best practice.
- Identify how Engaged Researcher programme could be improved in the future, not only in terms of existing course delivery, but where the programme could be expanded or developed further.

We also aimed to make some recommendations about future evaluation, not only in terms of maximising the utility and response rates of current training evaluation forms, but to also identify other data sources that could be utilised in the future.

- Identify if existing pre and post training evaluation could be developed further.
- Investigate methods to refine data collection to capture not only current outputs but wider impacts.

- Refine existing trainer evaluation methods to ensure opportunities to 'train the trainers' are maximised.

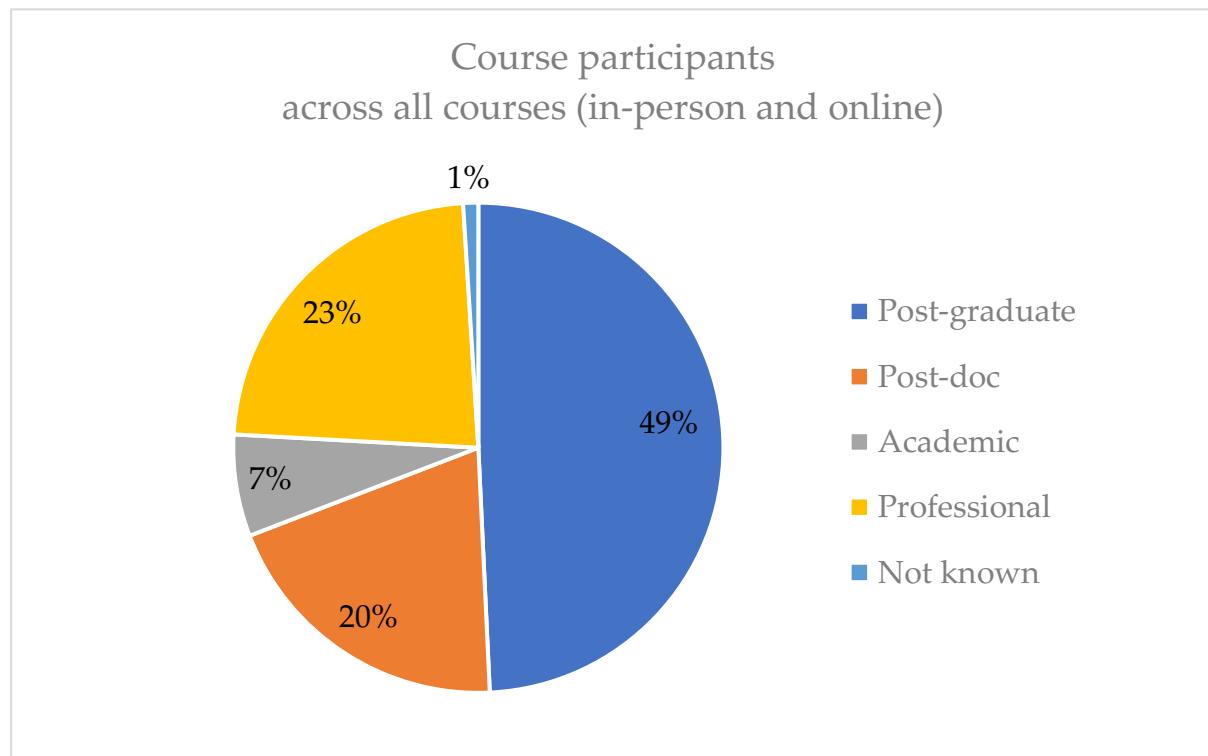
Results

Attendance

Across the academic year 2019-2020 there were a total of 33 courses with 20 of these being face to face and 13 online, with 436 participants (see Appendix 2 for course list). This is a considerable increase, almost doubling the training courses and attendance from the previous academic year when in 2018-2019 there were a total of 17 sessions and 227 participants.

Participants

Overall across all courses the largest proportion of those attending training were early career researchers 69% post-graduate or post-doc, although there was a higher proportion of early career researchers for in person training (72%) compared to the online training (61%), which was largely due to lower rates of post-graduates attending the online courses (35%, compared to 55% of in person courses). For post-doctoral students there was a slightly higher rate for online training (26%) compared to in person (17%). For academic staff rates were also slightly higher for online training at 30% compared to in person training at 21% of participant.



The courses have been well supported, with overall bookings at 70% of available spaces. There was a marked increase when the courses moved online with booking increasing from 62.5% for the in-person courses to up to 93% for the online courses. This is also reflected in the waiting lists for places, which for in-person courses were only 0.5% of spaces, whereas there was significant demand for places on the online courses and waiting lists with an average of 68% above capacity on the waiting list.

Response rates for evaluation forms are high at 85% across both in-person and online training (with rates higher for online 92%, compared to in-person 80%). Interestingly participants seemed to be more willing to provide longer free text responses for online evaluation, perhaps because it is often quicker to type responses or perhaps as time may be less limited because of the pressure to complete a form before leaving after an in-person training session.

Online format

Adapting the courses for online was a significant change and was turned around extremely quickly, yet the feedback is excellent and the courses have clearly been well received and most have been over-subscribed.

There were two participants, from different courses, who both commented that it was hard to fit the self-directed work into the single week with their other commitments and that more time would have allowed them to be more creative and a longer timescale would allow more opportunities for feedback and reflection.

"Would really have appreciated more time between sessions - so difficult to fit the homework in during the week, with other commitments. Also some brainspace might have been really good to try things out in, play around, think creatively, and feel more comfortable with the many different techniques and tools shared. Perhaps spreading the sessions over as many as 2-4 weeks might work - one session a week even, or the main sessions in the first week, then the 1:1 calls a week or two later, and then the group review a week or two after that - so we can really get into our animations and create a proper little showcase or final animation to show everyone."

"It would have been nice to have more time to shoot and edit the video. This week I was very busy and did not manage to make the most of the opportunity to receive support and feedback and to make a video I could actually use. Splitting the training over 2 weeks might be helpful and allow to have more meaningful 1-1 sessions."

There was a further comment on scheduling that it is helpful if sessions are the same time on consecutive weeks as it can be hard for people to find different time slots on different days.

Feedback from several trainers also reflected the thoughts of participants in that they felt the new online format would benefit from being spread over a longer time period to provide more opportunity for 'homework' between session and to extend the sessions and allow for more group sharing and reflection:

"We may need longer mentoring sessions once researchers realise the benefit of these."

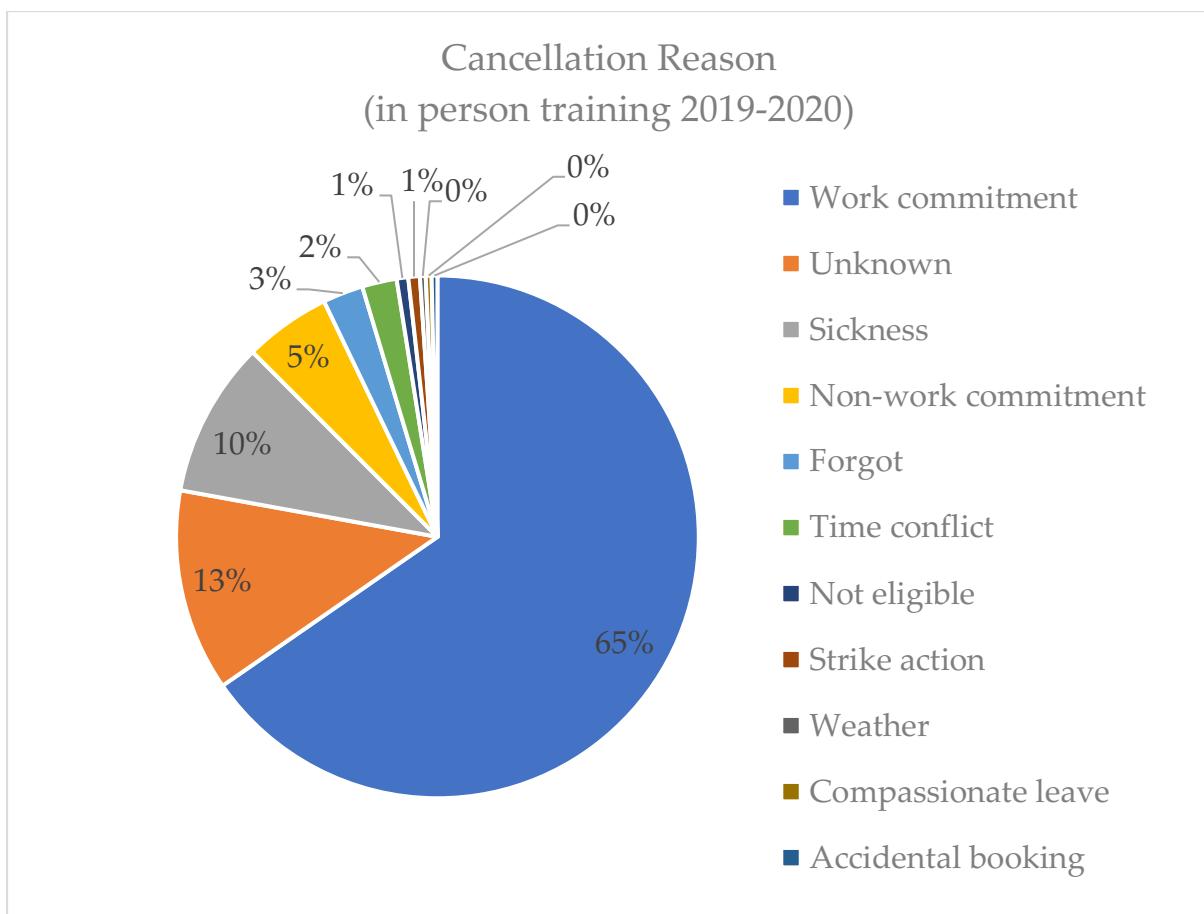
"We need to think about the timings of sessions to allow more interaction. Perhaps a longer event, maybe 2hrs."

"I think the session is quite heavy on content and it could be useful to stretch it over a longer period of time to show more examples in depth, and to give participants more time to work on their own project between sessions. Also, a second round of 1:1 mentoring could be useful for some projects to ensure that they have high-quality outputs at the end."

Cancellations

Overall across all courses 34% of available spaces were cancelled, with higher cancellation rates for in person training (38.5%) compared to online training (21%).

Where a reason was provided for the cancellation in advance (in person training), the majority of cancellations (65%) cited 'work commitments' for their reasons for cancellation. This corresponds with wider surveys that show researchers report they are keen to do more training, but time and other commitments are the main limiting factors.

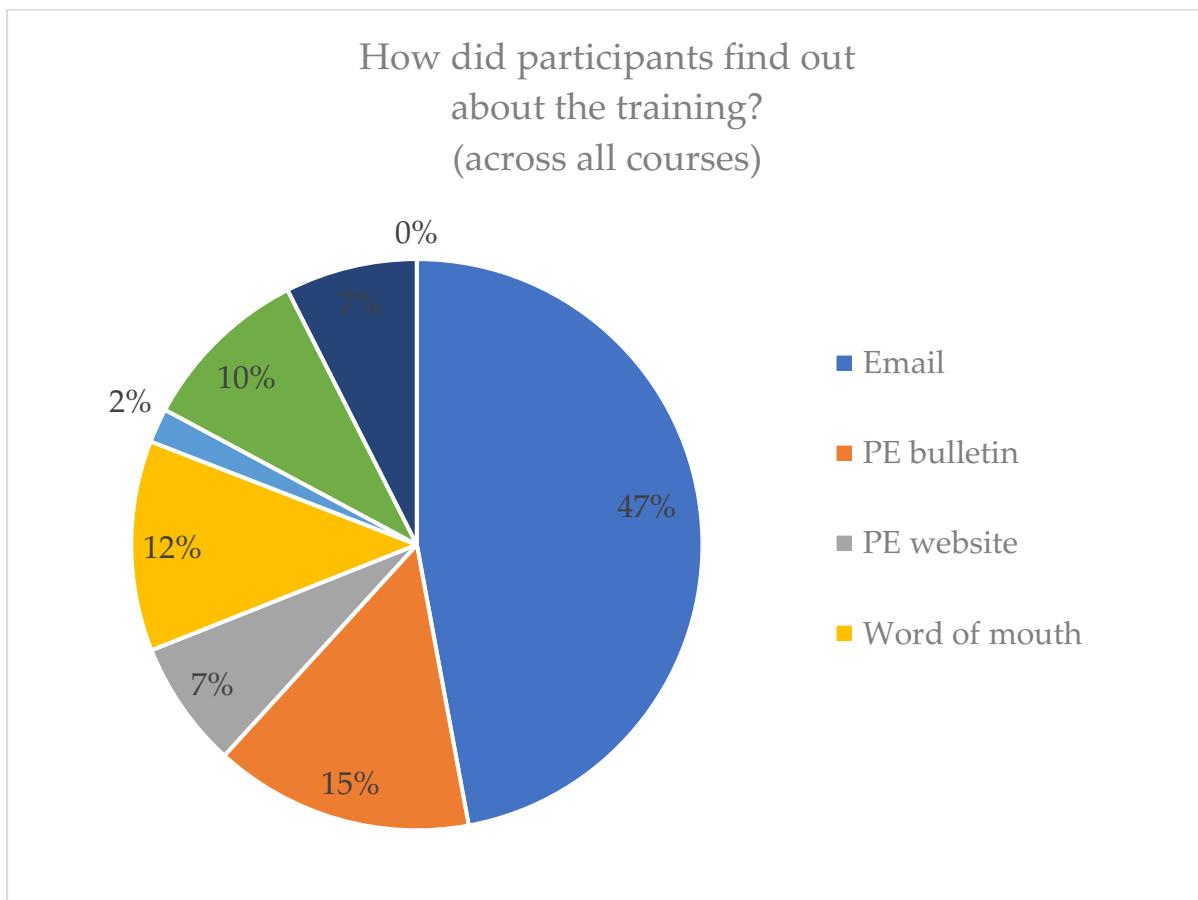


Overall there was not enough data to draw any conclusions about whether the location impacted cancellations. There was also no clear pattern with time of day or course duration, although the majority of training sessions were 3-4 hours and

scheduled during the morning, so again it is hard to draw comparisons between the smaller number of sessions at other sites or at other times of day. Similarly, there did not seem to be a pattern around when training was scheduled during the academic year.

Promotion

Half of those providing feedback questionnaires reported hearing about the course via email, with the Public Engagement bulletin (14%) and Public Engagement website (11%) also being important, and word of mouth (9%) and newsletters (7%) also featuring. This was very comparable between responses from the in-person training and the online courses, with the PE website being slightly more important for the in-person training (15%) compared to the online training when only 6% reported hearing about the course via the PE website.



Personal objectives for attending the training

The vast majority (77%) cited ‘personal development’ as their reason for attending the training course, with only 1.4% citing training credits.

Although the personal objectives were usually specific to the training course, the majority were seeking to gain new skills or improve existing skills, and as part of this to improve their confidence. In some cases, the participant hoped the training would provide a ‘stepping-stone’ to further training or new tools available. Some were looking for clarification or reassurance that their current practice was appropriate or could be improved. Whilst others were looking more for new ideas and to improve their creativity. A small number were specifically attending to pass on the skills to their wider teams.

Four participants cited specifically that they wanted to gain skills for ‘employability’ or to ‘explore careers’. A small number were honest in just listing ‘curiosity’ or ‘to have fun’.

One clear exception was the ‘Working with museums’ course, as over half of the responses cited wanting to collaborate with museums, or volunteer. To a lesser extent a similar pattern was seen with ‘Working with schools’, where responses focussed on understanding how the University already works with schools, how to develop or improve outreach, and to make contacts.

There were also some good examples of where participants had attended more than one course to meet a specific personal aim:

“I would like to marry the skills from this [Making/editing your research video] to the skills from the Research Storytelling to see how effective I can bring the visuals and auditory side of the results.”

Training rating

Overall across all the courses the training was rated highly. Across all of the questions where dimensions of the course were rated, with poor rated as 1 and excellent as 5, the average score was consistently over 4 for meeting course objectives, quality of materials, ability of the presenter, structure of the event and how useful the event was for personal development. With the ability of the presenters being very highly rated in particular (score of 4.7).

Rating (rating 1 poor to 5 excellent)	All	In-person	Online
How well the event met its stated objectives?	4.4	4.4	4.3
How would you rate the quality of the materials?	4.3	4.4	4.1
How would you rate the ability of the presenter?	4.7	4.8	4.6
How would you rate the structure of the event?	4.3	4.4	4.2
How useful was the event for your personal/professional development?	4.2	4.2	4.1

The scores were very comparable between the in-person training and the online courses. The in-person training was rated slightly higher but given the online training was new and used a new format, this indicates that moving the training online was very successful especially given the rapid change.

The evaluation forms also asked participants to rate their competence and confidence before and then after the event (scale ranged from very low 1 to very high 5). Using a change in the self-rated score from before the training to afterwards should help adjust for differences between how the individual perceives themselves (as the more self-confident tend to rate themselves more highly than those individuals who may be more self-critical or less self-confident).

The average change in self-reported ‘competence’ and ‘confidence’ across all training was 1.16. There was a slightly greater increase in reported competence for in-person training (increase of 1.19) compared to an increase of 1.13 in competence for online training. Whereas there was a slightly higher reported change in confidence for online of an increase of 1.20 (compared to 1.13 for in-person training). Although these differences are small, as the self-reported data for both competence and confidence across both in-person and online is very consistent.

	Competence before training	Competence after training	Change
In-person	2.44	3.63	1.19
Online	2.40	3.53	1.13
ALL	2.43	3.59	1.16

	Confidence before training	Confidence after training	Change
In-person	2.62	3.75	1.13
Online	2.44	3.64	1.20
ALL	2.54	3.71	1.16

Outcomes and Impacts

Participants were asked 'How likely to make a change (process or behaviour) as a result of attending this event?' which again scored highly at an average of 4.16 (with 1 not likely and 5 very likely) (4.17 for in-person training and 4.15 for online training).

It is always harder to gather data on outcomes and later impacts, especially as these may take some months to realise, however planned intentions do give an idea of direction, likely outcomes and potential subsequent impacts. The trainers were asked if they had any further contact with course participants following the training course, or if they were aware of any outputs or impacts resulting from the training. Two of the trainers responded that students had made contact following the training course, in both cases to seek additional advice and feedback and one trainer was aware of a video produced and posted to YouTube.

However, the free text responses to 'What actions will you take as a result of this event' are more informative, as these collected a wide range differing intentions. Some were relatively short-term actions, such as trying out tools or materials suggested as part of the training. Whereas other intentions and planned actions were much longer term, such as planning an event, sharing their training further or seeking new collaborations for further work.

Overall there were 249 separate written responses to the 'What actions will you take...' question. Often the specific actions reported depended upon the course itself, for example training on social media was most likely to result in reporting creating a social media account or producing material to share on social media. However, individual content could be grouped into similar themes / broader categories:

- Using the training, improved skills and increased confidence.
- Seeking further information, knowledge or additional training.
- Going on to share training and knowledge further.
- Create a plan for future action.
- Create outputs.
- Seek opportunities to practice.
- Seek opportunities to collaborate.

Example actions and outcomes.

Course	Intention	Outcomes
Introduction to social media	'I am now more informed how to effectively use Twitter'	Using the training, improved skills and increased confidence.
Comedy in communicating your research	'Relating my work with other people's experience: connecting to everyday life.' 'Build narratives around my work and simplify it.'	
Animate your research	'I will be much more confident to make and use visual representation in my research.'	
Shooting / editing your research video	'I will be more confident and brave.'	
Illustrate your research	'Try out some great new tools and ideas – thank you!'	

Course	Intention	Outcomes
Finding your research story	'I will read the recommended books'	Seek further information or training.
Comedy	'Look for more training.'	
Working with museums	'Look up resources at home...'	
Animate your research	'I will perhaps take a course on LinkedIn Learning on PowerPoint animation.'	
Finding your research story	'Share with my comms team.'	Sharing of knowledge.
Introduction to PE	'Bring into share with my team.' 'Train juniors.' 'Write up notes and distribute to my team.' 'Help faculty to be more creative when thinking about events and locations.'	
Working with schools	'Talk to our researchers about working with schools.'	
Introduction to online PE	'Share some of the content, such as risks to think about or the logic model, with the faculty... to help them plan their PE activities.'	

Course	Intention	Outcomes
Introduction to social media	<p>'Engage with more social media platforms.'</p> <p>'Create a professional Twitter account'</p> <p>'Plan to collect and create content for social media.'</p>	Planned action.
Finding your research story	'Going to start using bullet points instead to make absolutely sure I don't [seem] scripted.'	
Planning and evaluating impactful PE	<p>'I will plan for a public engagement work group...'</p> <p>Keep a note of what worked well and didn't to help future events.'</p> <p>'Develop initial steps in strategy.'</p>	
Patient & public involvement	'Setting up PPI for own group.'	
Working with schools	'Organise an outreach event.'	

Course	Intention	Outcomes
Shooting / Editing\ your research video	<p>'... use my footage of my past research work & probably make a video'.</p> <p>'Piece together previous project videos.'</p> <p>'Try making more short films.'</p>	Create new outputs.
Animate your research.	<p>'Make a visual abstract, maybe a poster / animation.'</p> <p>'I am inspired to use the tools and generate a visual product from my research.'</p> <p>'Definitely start creating own gifs/MP4 animations for tweets and presentations.'</p>	
Introduction to online PE	'I hope to produce a research video or animation and post it to YouTube.'	
Illustrate your research	'I will finish my zine!'	

Course	Intention	Outcomes
Finding your research story	'More proactively seek to write.'	Seek opportunities to practice.
Intro to PE	'Doing a PE event.' 'Get involved in more PE events' 'Organise a PE event in the future'	
Introduction to media engagement	'Practice my interview about positive and negative questions.' 'Do more prep work for interviews, particularly thinking about my key message.'	
Comedy	'Embrace incorporating comedy into presentations.'	
Working with museums	'Try to develop a few workshops around medieval medicine as a starting point.'	
Working with schools	'Getting in contact with outreach coordinator.'	

Course	Intention	Outcomes
Introduction to media engagement	'Contact for advice when doing press releases.' 'Contact before publication.'	Seek collaboration.
Working with museums	'Come up with potential ideas to engage with museums across Cambridge and involve fellow post-docs in activities.' 'Contact museums for volunteering.' '... talk to curators about objects in the collection we could use.'	
Engagement with policy	'Reach out to more contacts... build profile as an expert.'	
Introduction to online PE	'Make contacts with people who might be able to support further development in this area / and or collaborate on future activities.'	

External expectations of engagement training

There are a wide range of external stakeholders and recognised best practice, which can be used as a 'benchmark' for the Engaged Researcher programme. Research funders now increasingly have formalised engagement strategies and engagement forms part of their expectation and reporting processes.

The Medical Research Council (MRC) specifically provides guidance on the skills researchers need to be developing at each stage of their career, which includes communication and engagement skills. For example, at 'research training' stage (PhD students), individuals should have an awareness of the context of their research, including societal and ethical issues. They should also recognise the importance the importance of public engagement activities and have an interest in developing relevant skills and experience. By the next level of 'transitioning to independence' (post-doctoral), individuals are expected to have developed excellent communication skills and be able to communicate with a range of different audiences, as well as showing how research outcomes will be disseminated within and outside the research community. The expectation is that by the time researchers are moving towards 'leadership' (senior fellows), they should also be confident communicating across audiences, including academic, public and media.

Researchers are increasingly expected to include engagement as part of their work and training is an essential element in driving and supporting this change. It should be recognised that researchers need different skills at different stages of the research process, but that both communication and engagement skills are important (Holliman, 2017).

The current range of courses within the Engaged Researcher programme provides a good mix of communication skills, from written and graphic skills, through to presentation and tailoring your message to different audiences. Although there is no predefined set of training for early career researchers, as skills and training needs will vary with their researcher area and career path, as well as their interests and preferences. However, we sought to cross reference the existing Engaged Researcher programme against the nationally recognised Researcher Development Framework (RDF) (Vitae, 2011) and specifically the Lens on Public Engagement which focusses on public engagement skills and careers (Vitae, 2012). The RDF outlines the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of successful researchers with the aim of encouraging them to reach their potential. The RDF can be used by individuals to assess both the breadth and depth of their skills in a series of domains. However, it has also been used at the programme level (Holliman, 2017).

For this report, we have mapped individual aspects of the RDF Lens on Public Engagement to the courses that form the Engaged Researcher programme.

Researcher Development Framework – Domain A

DOMAIN A – Knowledge & Intellectual Abilities			
A1 Knowledge base	Core	Engaging with the public can be used to elicit insights, knowledge and expertise from the public to inform research and better understand the relevance of research to society. Can provide an overview of their area of expertise; has a secure knowledge and understanding of the topic they are engaging about. Is willing to incorporate new views into their own understanding.	
A2 Cognitive abilities	Advanced	Is willing to provide an expert opinion.	
A3 Creativity	Core	Collaborative working with the public can bring new insights to solve problems and approach research from a new perspective. Uses feedback mechanisms that are accessible to the publics they are working with; gathers feedback on activities; is open to constructive feedback; is prepared to be disagreed with.	
Engaged Researcher 2019 - 2020	Advanced	Is able to conduct formative and summative evaluation activities; distils learning from evaluation; incorporates learning from evaluation into the generation of new public engagement opportunities; shares their learning/evaluation with others.	
Introduction to social media	Core	Understanding and being able to respond to the publics' views of research requires an inquiring mind and being open to new sources of ideas.	
Finding your research story	Advanced	Is willing to provide supporting information; can answer related questions; can elicit and answer audience questions.	
Planning & evaluating	Core	Is open to new ways of working; is willing to consider differing views.	
Sharing your research story	Advanced	Ensures there is space for all contributions; can build on audiences' prior knowledge and conceptions, making links with their knowledge and areas being discussed; is willing to provide evidence and opinion.	
Introduction to media			
Your research video			
Impact			
Evaluation of public engagement			
Comedy in communicating			
Working with Museums			
An introduction to PPI			
Working with schools			
Animate your research			
Engage with Policy			
Working with funding bodies			
Introduction to public engagement			
Illustrate your research			
Brand yourself			
Using game design			
Online engagement with children			
Engaging on animal research			

Researcher Development Framework – Domain B

Engaged Researcher 2019 - 2020		DOMAIN B – Personal Effectiveness		
Introduction to social media		B1 Personal qualities	Core	Engaged researchers report that the public's interest in their research reignites their enthusiasm and passion for their research area. Reflects on their practice and tries to learn from their experience; shows evidence of learning; is able to recognise when professional help is needed.
Finding your research story				
Planning & evaluating				
Sharing your research story				
Introduction to media				
Your research video				
Impact				
Evaluation of public engagement		B2 Self-management	Advanced	Public engagement can provide an opportunity to apply and develop skills in running projects, which can develop skills such as time management, preparation and prioritisation. Is willing to change their mind; can be flexible in their approach, changing tasks to meet the situation.
Comedy in communicating				
Working with Museums				
An introduction to PPI				
Working with schools				
Animate your research				
Engage with Policy				
Working with funding bodies				
Introduction to public engagement		B3 Professional & career development	Core	Public engagement can raise researchers' profiles, enhance their reputation, build networks and relationships, and develop skills that enhance their employability both within and outside academia.
Illustrate your research				
Brand yourself				
Using game design				
Online engagement with children				
Engaging on animal research				

Researcher Development Framework – Domain C

DOMAIN C – Research Governance & Organisation			
Engaged Researcher 2019 - 2020	C1 Professional conduct	Core	Engagement projects develop skills of empathy, listening, communication and respect for others. Operates in a professional manner at all times Identifies social, political and ethical issues of relevance to particular audiences.
Introduction to social media			
Finding your research story			
Planning & evaluating			
Sharing your research story			
Introduction to media			
Your research video			
Impact			
Evaluation of public engagement			
Comedy in communicating			
Working with Museums			
An introduction to PPI			
Working with schools			
Animate your research			
Engage with Policy			
Working with funding bodies			
Introduction to public engagement			
Illustrate your research			
Brand yourself			
Using game design			
Online engagement with children			
Engaging on animal research			
	C2 Research management	Advanced	Ensure transparency throughout the process; is aware of relevant/controversial ethical issues within the field and takes these into account in their own engagement activity.
	C3 Finance, funding & resources	Core	Public engagement activities often require an ability to plan and deliver projects, and provide a relatively easy way to use and develop these skills. Public engagement can inform research so it contributes to the wider aims of all stakeholders.
		Core	Public engagement can enable researchers to maximise and communicate impact and potential impact more effectively through funding proposals, RCUK's Pathways to Impact, Research Excellence Framework (REF) impact templates and case studies.

Researcher Development Framework – Domain D

DOMAIN D – Engagement, Influence & Impact			
Engaged Researcher 2019 - 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to social media Finding your research story Planning & evaluating Sharing your research story Introduction to media Your research video Impact Evaluation of public engagement Comedy in communicating Working with Museums An introduction to PPI Working with schools Animate your research Engage with Policy Working with funding bodies Introduction to public engagement Illustrate your research Brand yourself Using game design Online engagement with children Engaging on animal research 	D1 Working with others	Core	Respects and values input from others. Is sensitive to issues of diversity and inclusion; relates well to different groups; appreciates how partnerships can enhance public engagement activity; responds positively to the expertise and insights of other professionals and non-experts.
	D2 Communication & dissemination	Advanced	Ensures there is space for all contributions; can manage groups effectively, uses appropriate techniques to stimulate discussion or deal with challenging behaviour Can broker effective relationships and partnerships; identifies key stakeholders and ensures their inclusion; identifies appropriate partners for particular roles; can manage conflict and achieve resolution.
	D3 Engagement & Impact	Core	Can differentiate how they speak or write for different audiences; communicate their personal commitment and interest in the topic; make presentations using props and AV resources; provide relevant examples, stories, activities and metaphors; adapts language to the needs of particular audiences. Is sensitive to the needs of audiences.
		Advanced	Can speak and adapt to almost any audience; can speak or write on a number of given topics. Keeps channels of communication open with all participants at all times.
		Core	Understands their own motivation for engagement. Identifies social, political and ethical issues of relevance for particular audiences.
		Advanced	Has a secure knowledge and understanding of a wide range of engagement approaches including discussion, debate and deliberative approaches.

Wider support for engagement learning

There were some consistent themes for additional support within text question on the course evaluation forms 'Please tell us any further feedback or suggestions that you may have about this event?' Although this question is specifically framed about the course itself there were some useful general suggestions, which could be grouped thematically:

- Further resources
- Further training
- Feedback and reflection
- Opportunities to practice

Example suggestions for further support

Course	Materials / resources
Media engagement	'More info on how to get started on a platform.' 'Some slides, list of YouTube clips and interviews.'
Research video	'If the materials could be made available online'.
Planning & evaluating impactful PE	'Maybe include more examples of PE events within Cambridge or ideas for PE events in general.'
Working with museums	'Emailing the slides is very useful. Perhaps you could also send round some course material for the training portfolio mentioned or links to resources about museum education. 'Few more concrete details (who to email/ask about particular things) perhaps a contact sheet.' 'Could be followed by 1-2 more detailed case studies of projects'.
PPI	'... visual flowchart... what to consider and stages of PPI...' 'More case studies'
Introduction to PE	'Perhaps a list of available tools in each category?'
Animate your research	

Course	Further training
Media engagement	'Is there a second level course?'
Evaluation of PE	'Needs more advanced level follow on.'

Course	Feedback and reflection
Media engagement	'I would have liked to share out ideas and get feedback from the organisers and the attendees.'
Finding your research story	'Could have had more speaking practice time with the whole group'.
Comedy	'... maybe practice with slides. Get feedback.'
Evaluating PE	'It was really nice to meet/talk with people from different departments and exchange ideas.' 'Bit of time to plan an event we want to run.'
Working with schools	'A formal discussion, Q&A session.'
Illustrate your research	'... continued support... where to go next... Perhaps some guidance as to what to do / who to approach...' 'Would have been great to have showcase / feedback session in a group a few weeks later.'
Brand yourself	'I would have loved some more group brainstorming or creating sessions.'
Illustrate your research	

Course	Opportunities to put training into practice
Working with museums	'Would be useful to have representatives from all the museums to give ideas what you could work on (what the upcoming projects/events are).'

The NCCPE have developed The EDGE Tool (NCCPE¹), which institutions can use to assess their support for engagement across multiple domains; mission, leadership, communication, support, learning, recognition, staff, student and public. Two of these areas, learning and students, are particularly relevant to the Engaged Researcher programme. Looking specifically at the 'Learning' domain within the

EDGE tool, the University is within their highest category of support 'Embedding'. There is strategic support for professional development in engagement. The University offers a high-quality engagement training programme, which is evaluated, and draws on experience from a range of engagement training providers. There are a range of opportunities to get involved in public engagement and put training into practice, which is promoted via a public engagement website and regular email bulletins. There are also mechanisms to be reflective and support for sharing learning and best practice through the public engagement network which meets at least three times a year, where members can share and reflect on learning. There is also an annual public engagement conference that further supports the community and provides support for learning and sharing best practice.

Discussion

Overall the Engaged Researcher programme is well structured and covers a wide range of early career training needs, providing a comprehensive range of skills around communication and engagement. There is also good additional support beyond the training, via the Public Engagement website, bulletin and regular meetings.

The current evaluation forms clearly demonstrate that the courses are highly rated. They collect a broad range of useful information to inform about satisfaction and where improvements could be made, which are also shared with the trainers. Since moving online, the evaluation responses are often more comprehensive and sharing these in full with the trainers would be very helpful, as it is the more qualitative feedback which is most helpful, especially when this includes specific recommendations on format or content.

Where other institutions have sought to evaluate their training programmes (case studies from Manchester Beacon, CUE East, Edinburgh Beltane and Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute within 'How to Support Public Engagement', NCCPE) all found that a personalised approach was important so that individuals could select training that best met their own needs, rather than a set sequence or progression. This is especially relevant with engagement training, as this can cover so many different directions and specialist skills.

The University of Cambridge Public Engagement team could seek to assess student's needs, via expanding the question set for the existing evaluation forms, to include a specific question about unmet training needs or interest in further courses. Although this is limited to those already interested in engaged researcher training. Alternatively, there may be opportunities to assess training needs around engagement as part of any wider University of Cambridge student training needs assessments for example for specific groups such as PhD students or post-doctoral students. There may also be technological ways to try and assess this, such as capturing search terms used for searching University of Cambridge training or via the UTBS (although this was not technically possible at the time of this report). If set up with the right tracking, email newsletters can also be useful for trialling different types of promotion though tracking if people are interested and seeking further information. It would also be useful if there was an option for people to suggest training, for example perhaps they are interested in a course but it is at a time they cannot attend, again email promotion can be a useful way to capture these examples.

One aspect that could be investigated is how to promote Engaged Researcher courses to individuals who may not see engagement as relevant to them personally or their research area. The national survey of researchers in 2015 (TNS-BMRB, 2015)

suggested that around 11% of researchers did not feel engagement was relevant to them. These researchers are less likely to be aware of the courses available or indeed the wider benefits of the training to them personally and for their career. Seeking different opportunities to promote the Engaged Researcher programme to these ‘unengaged’ researchers could not only increase training uptake, but could also help normalise engagement training as part of the wider skills set for all researchers. This could include short introduction courses or information provided at the point of starting their training, for example as part of the induction process or welcome events and emails. It could also be useful to experiment with framing the training and transferable skills in different ways to reach those who may not see engagement as relevant to them personally. One case study, Challenge CPD at the University of Bath (Featherstone, 2020), found that training was more likely to be taken up if offered ‘just in time’ and was linked to an opportunity to practice, such as a festival.

The Challenge CPD programme (Featherstone, 2020) also recognised that some individuals placed more value a stand-alone skill, such as video creation, whereas others more valued engagement training that was more explicitly embedded in their research practice, especially for researchers who identify primarily within their subject field. Again, it could be productive to badge or frame an existing engaged research course when promoting to specific groups, for example video skills for post-graduate scientists.

The Challenge CPD programme at Bath (Featherstone, 2020) also recognised that it was important to focus on the wider learning journey, how to encourage people to get started, to support their continuing development and to use these transferable skills within other aspects of their lives. These aspects are important for the promotion of the existing Engaged Researcher programme, as well as informing where training could be adapted to more closely meet the needs of different groups based on their experience and academic stage. Where individuals are within their learning journey is also important in terms of the need for wider support for learning, such as via providing collaborative and reflective support, which can be particularly helpful for those starting out or lacking confidence. The University of Cambridge has a number of festivals and outreach activities, as well as opportunities for wider collaboration with museums and schools, that can provide excellent opportunities for putting learning into practice and it may be worth experimenting with linking a specific course, such as Introduction to Public Engagement specifically with volunteering at the next festival, especially if this could be combined with a post festival meeting to allow sharing of the experience, feedback and reflection. This mechanism could also be used as an opportunity to gather evidence of wider impacts from training, as often these are not realised until much later, when participants have had time or opportunity to use their training as part of their work, sometime referred to as ‘training transfer’ (Featherstone, 2020).

The current range of courses within the Engaged Researcher programme is already comprehensive and well received. There were a small number of individuals seeking information about further training, but it may be more efficient to provide sign posting to external training for these individuals, rather than developing further courses in house. As a number of course participants responded that they would like additional resources, it would be possible to combine these by adding a resources and links to further training from the Public Engagement team website. Examples of what good practice may look like when starting out and when getting more developed could also be useful resources, as different examples and ideas can be both educational and motivational (Featherstone, 2020). Some of the trainer evaluation comments also suggested a repository for the sharing of resources, especially following the move to online training, which may involve additional resource sharing before, during and after an event. These kinds of repositories can also be useful for capturing organisation memory and acting as a learning resource for the future.

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Appendix 1

Engaged Researcher evaluation form:

University of Cambridge, Engaged Researcher Training	SESSION TITLE	DATE OF SESSION				
Please tell us about you						
What best describes your position at the university?						
<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate student <input type="checkbox"/> Postdoc/fellow <input type="checkbox"/> Academic staff <input type="checkbox"/> Professional/Support Staff						
How did you find out about this event?						
<input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> PE Bulletin <input type="checkbox"/> other newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> PE website <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Word of Mouth <input type="checkbox"/> Other						
Why did you attend this event?						
<input type="checkbox"/> Credits <input type="checkbox"/> Personal/professional development <input type="checkbox"/> Probation <input type="checkbox"/> Networking <input type="checkbox"/> Required to attend						
Pre-Event Section						
How would you currently rate your <u>competence</u> in relation to the objectives addressed in this event?						
very low	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	very high
How would you currently rate your <u>confidence</u> in relation to the objectives addressed in this event?						
very low	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	very high
What are your personal objectives for this event?						
Post-Event Section						
How well met the event its stated objectives?						
poor	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	excellent
How would you rate the quality of the materials?						
poor	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	excellent
How would you rate the ability of the presenter(s)?						
poor	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	excellent
How would you rate the structure of the event?						
poor	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	excellent
How useful was event for your personal/professional development?						
Not useful	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	Very useful

How likely are you to make a change (to a process or behaviour) as a result of attending this event?

Not likely Very likely
1 2 3 4 5

What did you find most useful about this event?

What did you find least useful about this event?

What actions will you take as a result of this event?

What would you say to others who may be considering attending this event in the future?

Please tell us of any additional feedback or suggestions that you may have about this event.

How would you currently rate your competence in relation to the objectives addressed in this event?

very low very high
1 2 3 4 5

How would you currently rate your confidence in relation to the objectives addressed in this event?

very low very high
1 2 3 4 5

Appendix 2

Engaged Researcher Course List - Academic Year October 2019 - July 2020

Title	Date	Duration	Delivery	Location
Introduction to Social Media Engagement	14.10.19	3	In-person	Central Cambridge
Finding Your Research Story	28.10.19	3.5	In-person	Central Cambridge
Introduction to planning and evaluating impactful public engagement	31.10.19	3	In-person	Central Cambridge
Sharing your research story	06.11.19	3.5	In-person	Central Cambridge
Introduction to Media engagement	08.11.19	3.5	In-person	Central Cambridge
Shooting your research video	18.11.19	7	In-person	Central Cambridge
Editing your Research Video	22.11.19	3.5	In-person	Central Cambridge
An introduction to planning and evaluating impactful public engagement	29.11.19	3	In-person	Central Cambridge
Impact	13.11.19	2	In-person	Central Cambridge
Evaluation of Public Engagement	03.12.19	3	In-person	Central Cambridge
Comedy	09.12.19	3	In-person	Central Cambridge
Media engagement	21.01.20	3	In-person	Biomedical Campus
Working with Museums	22.01.20	3	In-person	Central Cambridge
An introduction to planning and evaluating impactful public engagement	04.02.20	3	In-person	Biomedical Campus
Comedy in communicating your research	05.02.20	3	In-person	Central Cambridge
An introduction to Public and Patient Involvement and Engagement (PPI/E)	07.02.20	2	In-person	Biomedical Campus
Working with Schools	10.02.20		In-person	Central Cambridge
Animate your research	14.02.20	3	In-person	Eddington
Evaluation of Public Engagement	25.02.20	3	In-person	Biomedical Campus
Engage with Policy	06.03.20	3	In-person	Central Cambridge

Title	Date	Duration	Delivery	Location
PE Masterclass: working with funding bodies	04.05.20	2	Online	MS Teams
Introduction to Online Public Engagement	04.05.20	2.15	Online	MS Teams
Research Storytelling	11.05.20	4	Online	MS Teams
Animate your research	18.05.20	2.45	Online	MS Teams
Your research video online	25.05.20	5.15	Online	MS Teams
Research Policy	01.06.20	4	Online	MS Teams
Introduction to Online Public Engagement	08.06.20	2.15	Online	MS Teams
Illustrate your Research	22.06.20	3	Online	MS Teams
Brand yourself and your ideas professionally	29.06.20	2.35	Online	MS Teams
Game Changers Using Game Design to Promote Engagement with Research	29.06.20	3	Online	MS Teams
Online engagement with children of different ages (Primary and Secondary)	06.07.20	3	Online	MS Teams
Opening up: engaging with the public on animal research	16.07.20	1.5	Online	MS Teams
Introduction to Online Public Engagement	20.07.20	2.15	Online	MS Teams