



Centre for Medical Engineering King's College London

Public Engagement Strategy 2019-2022



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Background

The Wellcome/EPSRC Centre for Medical Engineering focuses on the science and engineering of medical imaging. The Centre combines fundamental research in engineering, physics, mathematics, computing, and chemistry with medicine and biomedical research.

Our ultimate aim is to improve the care and outcomes of patients with neurological, cardiovascular and oncological conditions. We will deliver this via four key aims:

- Provide the enabling infrastructure needed to deliver strong, grant-funded underpinning research, including several transformative initiatives that depend on strategic Centre funding
- Ensure that research is focused on important clinical and biological questions
- Facilitate the clinical and commercial translation of successful research and technological developments from each theme
- Engage public and patients with the research of the Centre and its clinical significance

Definition of Public Engagement

We use the definition by the [National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement](#):

"Public engagement describes 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."

Our vision:

Engaging publics about the Centre's world leading research and highlighting its impact and societal implications will be embedded in the Centre structure. Public engagement (PE) is one of our four key aims. PE will inform our research, and enhance our teaching and learning. Every member will be strongly encouraged to take part in PE, underpinned by professional support. We will look to refine our engagement, building on our experience of public and patient engagement within the existing Centre, to further improve its quality.

Strategic context:

Our vision feeds into the King's Strategic Vision 2029¹, specifically within the Service strategic framework². Service is the term adopted to describe the University's commitment to society beyond the traditional roles of education and research.

This framework illustrates how the ethos of service stands out at King's: simply put, King's are trying to make the world a better place above and beyond what is expected or required of a university.

Service is defined as an identifiable experience that is shared between King's staff and students and the community or environment (local, national or global) in which we operate. Service should measurably and positively change an outcome in the present or the future, through a planned intervention.

1. King's Strategic Vision 2029: <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/aboutkings/strategy/Kings-strategic-vision-2029.pdf>

2. Service Strategy: <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/aboutkings/strategy/kings-service-strategy.pdf>

Public Engagement Strategic Aims

We have one main overarching aim which is:

To develop a supportive culture of public engagement with the Centre

We aim to achieve this by:

1. Enabling publics and patients to inform our research and learning to ensure impact
2. Engaging public and patients about the Centre's research to empower them so that they feel more confident to access, use and respond to health research
3. Working with primary & secondary school-aged children in London, to enthuse and inspire young people about science

Why is Public Engagement important?

Public engagement can provide new perspectives and enrich the focus, clarity and relevance of research. It can build understanding and appreciation of the research within our Centre, as well as developing transferable skills. It can build trust in emerging research areas, and improve relationships between researchers, universities and local communities.

Key audiences

We will focus on certain public groups. The public are not homogenous, and identifying segments through demographics or communities of interest that will most benefit from or contribute to the purpose of research and engagement can substantially improve activities.

While we will encourage our researchers to work with the public most appropriate to the purpose of their engagement activity, Centre-led activity and support will particularly target:

- Patients (or carers/family members) with conditions relating to brain, heart or cancer. This group is affected by our research so engaging with this group will provide a voice for the end-users of our work, which will lead to better informed researchers, and more relevant, impactful research.
- Primary and secondary school-aged children in London
This group may be interested in finding out about careers available, to inspire the next generation of researchers and encourage STEM careers.

What support do the Public Engagement team provide?

The dedicated Public Engagement team can provide guidance and support with public engagement events or patient involvement activities, where public groups are engaged (i.e., patient groups, school children, or community members). The PE team offer training, resources, funding and opportunities to get involved in public engagement. They also offer advice on public engagement sections and lay summaries on research proposals and grant applications.

Making it happen

Aim 1: Enabling publics and patients to inform our research and learning ensuring impact

We will:

- Work with our partners Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) to set up patient engagement groups
- Provide toolkits and funding for staff and students to engage with patients

- Trial different approaches to PPI (public and patient involvement)

Aim 2: Engaging public and patients about the Centre's research, to empower them so that they feel more confident to access, use and respond to health research

We will:

- Engage our target audience of patients with cancer, heart or brain conditions as these are the three clinical challenges of our Centre
- Collaborate with our partner Evelina Children's Heart Organisation (ECHO), whose members are children with heart conditions
- Work with our partner Science Gallery London (SGL) on their Spare Parts season
 - work with artists and SGL on potential exhibits to display in the gallery exhibition
 - work with SGL on the associated event programme
 - participate in programming, for example youth engagement workshops, discussion events, and making workshops.
- Reach a wider audience through our involvement with external events such as festivals, which tend to attract families

Aim 3: Working with primary & secondary school-aged children in London, to enthuse and inspire young people about science

We will:

- Develop activities for secondary/primary schools to enthuse and inspire young people about science, and encourage them to participate in public dialogue about science
- Focus on target audience of schools and youth groups around St Thomas' Hospital in Southwark & Lambeth, as well as across London
- Work with our partners the BRC who organise the annual King's Health Partners (KHP) Summer School, a week-long school for widening participating students in Lambeth & Southwark

Overarching aim: To develop a supportive culture of public engagement with the Centre

We will:

- Encourage researchers to take part in externally organised activities. This may include science communication competitions, attending Festivals, and hosting Nuffield Research/In2Science Placements for disadvantaged students
- Support applications for further funding (e.g. King's PE Small Grants, Wellcome Trust PE awards & Royal Academy of Engineering's Ingenious awards)
- Equip researchers with knowledge about PE and how to tailor their message to different target audiences via a series of PE training courses
- Encourage researchers to join our existing King's Engaged Researcher Network to share experiences
- Appoint public engagement champions
- Encourage and incentivise and celebrate success
- Strengthen reward and recognition and push for inclusion of public engagement in the Performance Development Review of staff
- Produce an online resources area to direct researchers to
- Standardise signposting and connecting people

Governance

Our Public Engagement Advisory Board meet every 4 months. The Board provides advice to the Centre on public engagement and provide new ideas for programme development. Members of the Public Engagement Advisory Board demonstrate expertise in the strategy, planning, delivery, and evaluation of a range of public engagement programmes. The members of the Board have backgrounds from various disciplines, some having a solid understanding of the public engagement with research landscape. Membership and performance of the board will be reviewed annually.

There is a Public Engagement Committee who meet every 3 months, made up of staff and students from within the Centre, to lead on PE and to champion PE within their Department. There is also a group of Public Engagement Ambassadors made up of PhD students from the [Centre for Doctoral Training in Smart Medical Imaging](#).

Monitoring & Evaluation

The Public Engagement Team will develop an overarching monitoring and evaluation framework which sets out both output and outcome indicators tied to the four aims of Public Engagement Strategy for the Centre. The monitoring and evaluation framework will help the PE team understand how we are achieving our strategic aims, and sets out clear key indicators to track our progress and demonstrate changes.

Large scale events will be evaluated by an external evaluator while small scale events will either be carried out by the Centre's PE team or the researchers themselves.

The PE team will carry out a Centre-wide survey to get a benchmark and repeat it at the end of year 5.

Resources and Budget

Centre Public Engagement Manager, Alice Taylor-Gee (part time)

Centre Public Engagement Officer, Melissa Bovis, (full time)

The Centre for Doctoral Training Public Engagement Officer, Bella Spencer (part time)

The Centre has a budget of £95,000 over the 5 year period (April 2017 – April 2022) for activities, training and events.

Contact

If you would like to find out more about public engagement or are interested in linking up in any way, we welcome any questions, comments or new ideas. Please email [Alice Taylor-Gee](#), Public Engagement Manager or call 020 7848 9564.

Programme Plan

Aims	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Output indicators
1. Enabling publics and patients to inform our research and learning ensuring impact	Establish a PPI group	A PPI group with min. 10 patients meeting x3 a year	That researchers have an understanding of patients' priorities for research	Number of patients part of PPI group Number of researchers presenting to PPI group
2. Engaging public and patients about the Centre's research	Exhibit/s and events at Science Gallery London	Exhibit produced from artist-scientist collaboration	For our patients involved in our event/activities to feel more informed about our research	Measure public's understanding of our research Number of public events run by the Centre Number of participants at public events
3. Working with primary & secondary school-aged children in London, to enthuse and inspire young people about science	Hosting students eg In2Science, Nuffield placements. Running sessions for Widening Participation schools during KHP Summer School	1,000 children engaged Reach 80 Widening Participation school children	For the young people (we work with in London schools) to be interested in and aware of jobs in STEM and in hospitals	Number of school students booked into public engagement activities arranged by the Centre (divided by primary/secondary school students)
4. To develop a supportive culture of public engagement with the Centre	Deliver PE training Create a PE Advisory Group Develop a Centre PE Grant scheme Offer support for applying to external PE grants/ external scientific grants that have a PE component. Support KERN activities, workshops, blog.	80% PIs within the Centre trained in PE. A central location of PE resources for researchers eg online resource page to direct inquires to on how to evaluate, how to engage children We work with the Widening Participation team to link with selected schools	Researchers feel equipped with knowledge about what PE is Researchers value PE For our researchers to know about our team, our resources, what we can offer and how to contact us Researchers to undertake new journeys and routes to PE – independent working We contribute to a community where supervisors encourage all PhD students to engage in PE	Number of researchers involved in public engagement activities. Number of researchers (staff/students) who have taken part in training Measure if researchers feel public have informed their research Value of successful grants for public engagement (where indirect support has been provided) Number of public engagement projects funded across the Centre