WISERD – Strategy and Guide to Effective Engagement

Wales Institute of Social & Economic Research, Data & Methods
Sefydliad Ymchwil Gymdeithasol ac Economaidd, Data a Dulliau Cymru

WISERD – Strategy and Guide to Effective Engagement

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to set out WISERD's approach ('Strategy') to engagement by detailing aims, principles, methods, and proposed actions – as well as to summarise information relevant to realising these goals ('Guide').

2.0 WISERD – CONTEXT/ OVERVIEW

Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research and Data (WISERD) was established in 2008. The Institute is a collaborative venture between the Universities of Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff, South Wales and Swansea. The principal aims of WISERD are as follows:

- To develop the quality and quantity of social science research in Wales, particularly through externally-funded research projects
- To promote collaborative research activity across the participating universities and across disciplines and sectors
- To develop the social science research infrastructure in Wales
- To strengthen the impact of social science research on the development of policy in the public, private and third sectors through a focus on knowledge exchange and engagement
- To inform and strengthen professional practice by sharing research knowledge with experts across a range of fields - including social work, social care, health care, education and the third sector.

In terms of its research, WISERD is able to demonstrate expertise in:

- qualitative, quantitative and mixed methodologies
- knowledge and analysis of datasets relating to Wales
- a track record of generating successful research grant bids

WISERD is coordinated from a hub based at Cardiff University. The Institute has researchers and senior linked academics based in each of the partner institutions, and seeks to engage with the wider academic community, research users and stakeholders through its activities, networks and membership schemes.

WISERD's Research Themes

WISERD's work is organised around six themes:

a) Civil Society,
b) Education,
c) Health, Wellbeing & Social Care,
d) Economic & Social Inequalities,
e) Localities,
f) Data & Methods

(a). Civil Society

As a designated National Research Centre funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) WISERD is undertaking a five year research programme of multi-disciplinary, policy-relevant research addressing Civil Society in Wales, the UK and Internationally.

This programme of work is structured around four themes:

1. Locality, Community & Civil Society. This theme explores the reconfiguration and re-articulation of local civil society in the context of contemporary social and economic change. It is made up of four research projects or 'work packages' (WPs).

2. Individuals, Institutions & Governance. These projects will use the prisms of multi-level governance; neo-institutional theory and sub-national public policy-making to examine devolution and the changing relations between individuals, institutions in civil society and the state.

3. Economic Austerity, Social Enterprise & Inequality. This theme explores the inter-relationship between aspects of civil society and the economy in a time of austerity by examining how economic trends are related to key aspects of civil society including; levels of social enterprise, trade union membership and participation in associational life, access to community services, social cohesion and well-being at local scales.

4. Generation, Life Course & Social Participation. This theme will address the intergenerational transmission of values and beliefs and the intergenerational transfer of different forms of social, cultural and economic capital and how these relate to civil society. In so doing, it will explore variations in social participation and perceptions within and between generations.

(b). Education

WISERD Education's research is aimed at changing the landscape of education research in Wales in order to put Wales at the forefront of research capacity building developments in the UK and beyond. WISERD Education hosts a range of projects that have examined children's progress and experiences from the early years to the relationship between education, destinations and orientations in adult life. Funders include HEFCW, the Welsh Government, the ESRC and the Sutton Trust.

We use a diverse range of methods and specialise in longitudinal research which involves exploring data from various UK cohort studies as well as undertaking our own multi-cohort studies of children and young people in Wales.

The main aims of its Programme of Work are:

- to enhance the capacity to carry out high quality educational research within the higher education sector in Wales;
- to undertake research activities designed to improve the quality of learning and the standards of teaching and teacher education in Wales;
- to undertake translational activities to augment the research literacy of teacher educators, practitioners, policy-makers and other stakeholders;
- To put in place an infrastructure which will ensure that this capacity and activity can be sustained.

WISERD Education is configured in terms of four interrelated sets of activities:

1. Building on the investment and expertise already developed within WISERD, Research Infrastructure Enhancement will lay the foundations for a robust and sustainable research future in Wales. This will involve: the improvement of the functionality of existing datasets, through data integration and better access; and the establishment of

longitudinal studies of different age cohorts and institutions. These will be based in areas covered by the three collaborative centres of initial teacher education and represent the socio-economic, cultural and geographic diversity of Welsh society.

2. The research infrastructure will generate robust data for a series of Research Projects. We have outlined some indicative projects relating to poverty, progress and professional practice which will be undertaken during the early stages. External funding will be sought for further research projects to ensure sustainability.

3. The research projects will be a principal mechanism for Researcher Capacity Building across Wales through providing opportunities for postgraduate researchers within the ESRC Wales Doctoral Training Centre and enabling less experienced researchers to undertake research alongside those with greater experience and expertise.

4. The Programme will additionally facilitate a range of Translational Activities which will increase the research literacy of educational practitioners, policy-makers and university staff engaged in initial and continuing teacher education who are not 'research active'.

(c). Health, Wellbeing & Social Care (HWSC)

WISERD is carrying out a series of projects on social care, health and wellbeing.[1] Recent HWSC Research Projects include: Improving the experience of dementia and enhancing active life: living well with dementia, and Change in Alcohol Outlet Density and Alcohol-Related Harm to Population Health. The former is a longitudinal cohort study that uses a mixed methods approach and focuses on the potential for living well with dementia from the perspective of people with dementia and their primary carers. The latter is concerned with developing a new method of measuring alcohol outlet density in Wales using Geographical Information System (GIS) methods.

(d). Economic & Social Inequalities

Examples of current/recent research activities include: Labour Market Implications of Changes in the Public Sector and the Wales Housing Research Network. The former is investigating relative public sector pay across the earnings distribution, the quality of public sector jobs, and the effect of changes to public sector pay and employment on equality groups. The latter brings together researchers and research organisations in Wales in the field of housing. Researchers are exploring housing issues via a multitude of disciplines ranging from the social sciences and economics to architecture and health.

(e). Localities

Current work includes The Global Countryside: Rural Change and Development in Globalization (led by Prof M. Woods). Funded by the European Research Council this study aims to advance understanding of the workings and impact of globalization in rural regions through the development and application of new conceptual and methodological approaches. It will develop an integrated perspective by drawing on relational analysis (and particularly the approaches of 'assemblage theory'

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[1] Some projects are in conjunction with the Cardiff Institute of Society, Health and Wellbeing (CISHeW)

and 'countertopography') to focus on the actual mechanics by which rural localities are 're-made' through engagement with globalization processes, examining the mediating effect of national and regional context and the opportunity for local interventions.

(f). Data & Methods

WISERD is involved in a series of projects with a focus on maximising data usage and promoting methodological innovation. These include the WISERD DataPortal and the Administrative Data Research Centre Wales (ADRC Wales). The latter is part of the Administrative Data Research Network (ADRN) which was created to make the vast amount of administrative data collected by different government departments and agencies available for academic research. The Centre provides support and facilities for researchers to carry out analysis using this data at both Cardiff and Swansea universities. The former is a web-based software application which will enhance a researcher's ability to discover socio-economic research data, with the aim of encouraging re-use and re-purposing of existing data. It has been designed to provide access to rich meta-data on a wide variety of data sources - including qualitative interview data collected as part of WISERD research - and allow researchers to analyse the meta-data using a variety of tabular, graphical and mapping devices.

3.0 ENGAGEMENT: AIMS AND STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

The aims and guiding principles of WISERD's engagement activities can be summarised as:

- Knowledge sharing and dialogue at all stages of the research process
- Promoting understanding
- Seeking effective solutions to social issues/ securing a better society
- Upholding ethical practice and consistency with equality policies
- Excellence in research
- RCUK compliance
- Funded research proposal delivery

In addition, we are mindful of the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales (NPPEW).

1. Engagement is effectively designed to make a difference
2. Encourage and enable those affected to be involved, if they so choose.
3. Engagement is planned and delivered in a timely and appropriate way
4. Work with relevant partner organisations
5. Where appropriate,[2] the information provided will be jargon free, appropriate and understandable
6. Make it easier for people to take part. Such that barriers for different groups of people are identified and addressed.
7. Enable people to take part effectively
8. Engagement is given the right resources and support to be effective
9. People are told the impact of their contribution
10. Learn and share lessons to improve the process of engagement

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[2] As a leading academic research institute, use of specialist vocabulary and engagement with relevant social theory will be a feature of research outputs/ dissemination.

3.1 Equality and Diversity

Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research and Data aims to engage research users and other audiences in both the English and Welsh languages. In addition, WISERD also seeks to uphold the equality and diversity policies of its constituent institutions. These provide guidance on promoting equality in relation to a diverse range of engagement activities through effective planning and considering factors such as venue accessibility and provision of information in alternative formats. These considerations are consistent with NPPEW Principle 6.[3]

Useful links:

- Aberystwyth University Equality Policies http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/equality/

- Bangor University Equality Policies
  http://www.bangor.ac.uk/hr/equalitydiversity/index.php.en

- Cardiff University Equality Policies
  http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/govrn/cocom/equalityanddiversity/

- Equality and Human Rights Commission http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/

- Swansea University Equality Policies http://www.swansea.ac.uk/personnel/equal-opportunities/

- USW Equality Policies http://hr.southwales.ac.uk/hr/advice_and_guidance/

3.2 Language

Whilst academic work necessarily relies on the use of technical terms and engagement with social theory, allied to NPPEW Principle 5, WISERD's engagement and dissemination work will be tailored to different audiences. Wherever possible, we will seek to avoid unnecessary use of jargon in dissemination to non-academic users.

3.3 Confidentiality/ anonymity of research participants

Many research projects depend upon the participation of individuals and organisations. Their role is the subject of negotiation and agreement at the outset of projects (or when projects are modified/ adapted). This should be covered in the ethical approval required for WISERD projects (this will be secured from the relevant Ethics Committees of WISERD partner HEIs). Crucially, engagement activities should be planned and conducted in order that the agreed anonymity/ confidentiality of collaborating individuals and organisations is not compromised.

See for example:

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[3] To make it easier for people to take part. Such that barriers for different groups of people are identified and addressed.

- https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/beacon/CCDiscussionPapertemplateCBPRBanksetal7Nov2011.pdf

3.4 Acknowledgement of Partners

In publications and other forms of research dissemination colleagues will acknowledge the help, input/ cooperation of partners and stakeholders. This will often need to be phrased in a way that upholds the anonymity of research participants.

4.0 'ENGAGEMENT'

Public engagement can be defined as.

> *The myriad of* [non-discrete] *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.*[4]

In response to the question 'why engage'? RCUK assert:

> *Engaging the public with research helps empower people, broadens attitudes and ensures that the work of universities and research institutes is relevant to society and wider social concerns… [The aim is] to create a culture where public engagement is regarded as an important and essential activity by the research community. By establishing an ongoing dialogue between the research community and the public, society can benefit more fully from the outputs of research.*[5]

- See also the RCUK booklet 'What's in it for me?' http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/scisoc/RCUKBenefitsofPE.pdf

'Public' is defined by HEFCE as:

'Individuals and groups who do not currently have a formal relationship with a higher education institution (HEI) through teaching, research or knowledge transfer.'

A number of different strands make up our public engagement work:

- Informing the public about our work;
- Sharing our expertise with communities;
- Acting to develop a society where the next generation wants to engage in social research, teaching and learning;
- Providing opportunities for people outside WISERD HEIs to contribute their research and knowledge to WISERD's programmes;
- Engaging in wider discussion and dialogue about the direction of our research;
- Creating new knowledge in collaboration with communities and external interest groups.

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[4] www.publicengagement.ac.uk
[5] http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/pe/

4.1 Planning Engagement

In furtherance of NPPEW Principles 1, 2, 3, 7 & 8 - we seek to uphold the following guidance from the ESRC on factors to consider when planning engagement: [6]

•Be clear about why you are engaging with the public, both in your own mind and in your communication with potential participants. Do not raise unrealistic expectations amongst participants.

•Allow enough time to plan public engagement thoroughly, whether it is a small, one-off event or a sustained programme.

•When planning your public engagement strategy, consider who you wish to engage and why, their interests and why they might be interested in your research area. This will help you choose a suitable approach.

•Consider your own preferred communication styles and skills in the area of public engagement. You activities will be far more successful if you are comfortable delivering them.

•Developing an activity timeline or Gantt chart will help you manage the public engagement activity and identify potential pitfalls.

•Think about your public engagement role as one that is ongoing - this will allow you to connect your activities, build your expertise and develop a rapport with the groups you are engaging with. Do this at the pre-research bid stage, during research - as well during post-project evaluation.

•Build evaluation in at the start of the public engagement programme. Evaluating the experience or activity is the only way to learn what works.

•Share your experiences of public engagement with your colleagues; if possible, make your evaluation reports publicly available so that others can benefit from your experiences.

•Ensure you allocate enough money for public engagement activities when you apply to the ESRC for funding - too often plans remain vague at the time of application and insufficient funds are set aside for high quality activities. [7]

WISERD's public engagement is based upon a twin strategy: 1. Developing "in house" opportunities to engage the public – and 2. Targeted use of external events and organisations. Examples of the former include: public lectures; roundtable discussions; conferences; and workshops. Examples of the latter include the ESRC Festival of Social Science, and the National Eisteddfod. Research engagement also

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[6] Engagement is effectively designed to make a difference; Encourage and enable those affected to be involved, if they so choose; and Engagement is planned and delivered in a timely and appropriate way.
[7] http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/impact-toolkit/what-how-and-why/public-engagement/guide/index.aspx http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/impact-toolkit/what-how-and-why/public-engagement/top-tips.aspx

needs to be seen in an international context. In particular, in relation to the European Union http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/civil_society/index_en.htm - as well as the United Nations http://www.un.org/en/civilsociety/

4.2 Policy Engagement

The AcSS and ESRC define policy engagement in the following terms:[8]

> *responding to policy, practice or public agendas – through keeping an eye out for inquiries, reviews and consultations to which their disciplinary knowledge, perspective or methods are relevant; contributing submissions and responses to them; publishing reports and organising events on topical subjects; issuing press releases, writing for the press and practitioner journals.*

There are manifold ways of engaging with policy-makers. Key examples of legislative engagement include contributing to cross-party policy reviews and expert witness appearances before parliamentary committees. Such engagement will appear in the papers and proceedings of the legislature in question (e.g. NAfW, Westminster, Scottish Parliament etc.). This written record of engagement is important. As Section 5.4 (below) on 'Researchfish' explains, it is a means of evidencing policy impact and is one area of engagement that RCUK-funded research projects are required to report on.

Responding to government policy consultations is a further means by which WISERD researchers can shape policy. Government routinely publishes 'Summaries of Consultation Responses Received' - thereby providing written evidence of policy engagement/ policy input for reporting purposes. Making recommendations in government consultations presents a further opportunity to influence - as these may be incorporated into future policy.

Useful sites (executive branch of government) include:

- Welsh Government http://gov.wales/consultations/?lang=en

- Welsh local authorities http://www.wlga.gov.uk/responses-l-2014

- Scottish Government http://www.gov.scot/Consultations/Current

- Northern Ireland Executive http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/have-your-say-current-consultations

- Westminster government https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?publication_filter_option=consultations

- European Union http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/consultations/index_en.htm

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[8] http://www.esrc.ac.uk/_images/Developing_Dialogue_tcm8-4628.pdf

Useful sites (legislative branch of government) include:

- National Assembly for Wales
  http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=1534 and
  http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationListDisplay.aspx

- Scottish Parliament http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/gettinginvolved/current-consultations.aspx

- UK Parliament http://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/have-your-say/take-part-in-committee-inquiries/ and http://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/have-your-say/submit-evidence-on-a-bill/

The National Assembly for Wales Research Service is a further means of policy engagement. The Research Service provides expert and impartial research and information to support Assembly Members and committees in fulfilling their legislative scrutiny and policy development roles. Joining the e-mail distribution List (by contacting Research@Assembly.Wales) provides updates/ opportunities for engagement across the following policy areas: Assembly, Governance and Constitution; Budgets and Finance; Economy and Transport; Education and Culture; Environment and Sustainability; Europe; Health and Social Care; and Housing, Communities and Social Justice.

The Scottish Parliament Information Centre, http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/abouttheparliament/25888.aspx#SPICe is the equivalent organisation in Scotland. In a similar manner, the House of Commons Library provides impartial information and research services for Members of Parliament and their staff http://www.parliament.uk/commons-library Cross-party policy groups of the National Assembly for Wales also provide a useful means of engaging with policy-making http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mgListOutsideBodies.aspx

Aside from national legislative engagement, local government also presents opportunities for policy engagement (including local authorities, cities, city-regions, the GLA etc.). Details can be found via individual authorities' websites – as well as the representative organisations in each country:

- The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) http://www.wlga.gov.uk/
- Convention of Scottish local authorities (COSLA) http://www.cosla.gov.uk/
- Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) http://www.nilga.org/
- Local Government Association (LGA) http://www.local.gov.uk/

In addition, public sector bodies – such as the NHS, provide further opportunities to shape policy. A Directory of all non-devolved public bodies can be found here https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations

Devolved public bodies' web-links can be located via the national governments' websites:

- Welsh Government http://www.wales.gov.uk
- Scottish Government http://www.gov.scot
- Northern Ireland Executive http://www.nidirect.gov.uk

The third sector representative body in Wales, the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) seeks to influence policy. Co-working with the WCVA presents a further route to shaping policy. In its current priorities the WCVA has identified a number of key areas that it aims to influence, including:

- Appropriate funding
- Putting people at the centre
- Climate change
- Work and skills
- Tackling poverty
- Health and social care
- Welsh language

Web link:

http://www.wcva.org.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-influence

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) is the principal umbrella body for the voluntary and community sector in England https://www.ncvo.org.uk/

Umbrella body for voluntary organisations in Scotland is the SCVO http://www.scvo.org.uk/

In Northern Ireland NICVA provides information on voluntary organisations including services, training, advice on governance and fundraising and lobbying http://www.nicva.org/

In addition, there are a number of volunteering bodies in the UK including:

Northern Ireland – "Volunteer Now" http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/

And "Volunteer Scotland" http://www.volunteerscotland.net/

A further useful organisation is CIVICUS – or the World Alliance for Citizen Participation is an international alliance of members and partners which constitutes a network of organisations at the local, national, regional and international levels, and spans the spectrum of civil society. CIVICUS includes the following in its definition of civil society: civil society networks and organisations; trade unions; faith-based networks; professional associations; NGO capacity development organisations; philanthropic foundations and other funding bodies. Its self-stated vision is: a 'vision of a global community of active, engaged citizens committed to the creation of a more just and equitable world. This is based on the belief that the health of societies exists in direct proportion to the degree of balance between the state, the private sector and civil society'. http://civicus.org

4.3 Stakeholder Engagement

Broadly defined 'stakeholders' are 'actors from society who have an interest (a stake) in a specific policy issue'.[9] This implies that a stakeholder must have an awareness of a specific policy (or research issue) and, crucially, an interest in its impact. Stakeholders are vital to WISERD's work and work-packages and research teams are encouraged to develop their existing links with a broad range of

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[9] Kerkhof, M. (2006) Making a Difference: On the Constraints of Consensus building and the relevance of deliberation in stakeholder dialogues, *Policy Science* 39: 279-299

stakeholders drawn from across civil society – as well as the public and private sectors. WISERD fosters engagement with scheduled meetings with key stakeholders – such as the Welsh Government, ONS, and WCVA. In addition, the two WISERD-sponsored research networks on Language, Culture and Identity and, Housing – as well as the Research User Group and Advisory Board provide further stakeholder links.

4.4 Engaging with the Wider Academic Community

WISERD is itself a partnership of Higher Education Institutions across Wales and beyond. Colleagues can take an active role in promoting the work of WISERD across schools/ departments within their 'home' institution – as well as develop connections, share knowledge, and cooperate with the wider academic community. The latter will be achieved through ongoing engagement in conferences, seminars, research networks and specialist working groups. Academic networking research sites such as www.researchgate.com and www.academia.edu are another means of engaging.

The international dimension to academic engagement is integral to our work. It will be achieved by participation in overseas conferences such as those of:

- The International Society for Third Sector Research ISTR http://www.istr.org/
- The Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) (U.S.-based, national and international association that connects scholars, teachers, and practice leaders interested in research on nonprofit organizations, voluntary action, philanthropy and civil society). http://www.arnova.org/?page=upcomingconferences
- The Association for Nonprofit and Social Economy Research (ANSER) http://www.anser-ares.ca/home/

International engagement will also be achieved through International Visiting Fellowships – as well as through involvement in the activities of the ISTR International Research Networks (see section 5.5 below).

Engagement will also be achieved by participation in leading academic conferences in the UK – see Appendix A for a list of conferences suited dissemination of WISERD's work.

4.5 Marketing, Publicity and Virtual/web-based Engagement

This is crucial for successful engagement. Events and communications staff in the WISERD hub will be able to assist research teams in planning events. Please give hub staff as much notice as possible when seeking support for engagement events. Other points to consider include:

- Whether you can 'tap into' existing groups or networks in order to market your event (here, for example, colleagues are able to draw upon WISERD supported networks – the Housing Research Group – and the Language, Culture and Identity Research Network – as well as the Voluntary Sector Studies Network - VSSN).

- As noted, allow plenty of time to carry out promotional activities.

- Consider what materials you will need to promote your event (e.g. leaflets, invitations, tweets, e-mail publicity, posters/ advertising etc.)

- Ensure that marketing is compliant with Welsh language policy

- Make sure materials incorporate the appropriate WISERD logos/ design schemes – and, where appropriate, acknowledgement of funding bodies and partner organisations.

Virtual / web-based means of public engagement are also an effective way of engaging the public in our research. There are various ways in which this can be achieved including:

- Webinars
- Podcasts
- Video streaming of roundtables, seminars etc.
- Bulletin boards and online discussion of research
- blogs and Twitter feed
- Downloadable publications (e.g. *WISERD News,* working papers, and research reports).

For further information see:

- http://www.communityplanningtoolkit.org/sites/default/files/Engagement.pdf
- http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/sociology/staff/academicstaff/jensen/ericjensen/pero/framework.pdf
- http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/sociology/staff/academicstaff/jensen/ericjensen/pero/pero_working_paper_-_theorising_online_public_engagement_with_research_impacts_final_handover.pdf
- http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/sociology/staff/academicstaff/jensen/ericjensen/pero/jisc_pero_final_case_study_final_handover.pdf

4.6 Engagement: Issues and challenges

Researchers need to exercise their own judgement and be alive to a range of engagement-related issues and challenges. These include issues of potential co-option into participating organisations' agenda; maintaining researcher independence/ criticality; 'leverage' on research teams from gate-keepers/ political manipulation of access; participants witholding information; and the need for research teams to secure the most appropriate balance between other aspects of research - and engagement. Examples from the academic literature on the challenges of engagement for researchers are included in Appendix C.

5.0 EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

5.1 'Ownership'

All WISERD staff/ researchers 'own' - or are responsible for - engagement. The success of the Institute depends upon all taking an active role in the different types of engagement activity (and where appropriate, timely delivery agreed project/ work-package engagement Key Performance Indicators). Strategic direction is provided by the WISERD Executive and supported the Research Manager and Engagement Officer. It is the responsibility of all staff to further engagement.

5.2 Making Research Engagement a Two-Way Process

It is essential that engagement is a genuine two-way process – with knowledge exchange and modified actions as a result of interaction between researchers and others. In addition, it is important to engage research users and those you hope to influence at <u>all stages in the research process</u>. This includes engagement prior to submitting grant proposals, during the project, and in post-project reflection and evaluation. In other words, effective engagement bridges simultaneous and/or successive projects. In large part, this is about:

- effective communication and dialogue;
- listening and exchanging knowledge and ideas;
- and, inputting suggestions into project implementation and evaluation.

The latter involves critical reflection - deciding if/ how feedback assists in the achievement of your research aims (and whether it is practical with the available resources/ timescale) – and, where appropriate, ongoing modification/ adaptation of your research activities.

Consultation is a key part of this process. In other words, seeking the views of - and input from - your target audiences / those affected by your work/ 'the public'. 'Consultations' are broad in nature and may involve a variety of activities. As noted, of particular value is consultation at the project planning stage. For example, consulting people about what they feel are the key issues, and what steps might be necessary to achieve a more focussed piece of research. Useful tips to facilitate this include:

- *Start early*: Once you have established who your stakeholders are, begin to contact relevant people early on in your project planning;
- As a starting point *build on established networks and contacts* – then branch out and develop your networks as you progress. 'Snowballing' can assist here – ask stakeholders and others for suggestions as to whom to involve.
- *Keep it simple*: when approaching people to consult/ engage common sense measures can help – for example: keep emails brief, give clear and succinct overviews of your work and what you want from those you seek to engage;
- *Incentives*: for example: tie your consultation into an existing event that people are keen to attend – be clear about 'what's in it for them' – how stakeholders and others can benefit from involvement in your research;
- *Make it easy* for external partners to engage (e.g. common sense measures - like the timing and location of meetings, accessibility of information, clarity of communication etc.);
- *Allay fears/ reservations* – where appropriate, address potential stakeholder/ participant reticence by underlining how your research will uphold ethical practice/ maintain anonymity and confidentiality.

As noted, it should be emphasised that engagement with stakeholders is but one part of the wider process – and that co-production of knowledge also stems from engaging members of the public and 'lay' audiences.[10]

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[10] The foregoing points and others link to issues covered in Sherry Arnstein's classic text – which remains a useful reference: Arnstein, S. (1969) "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969, pp. 216-224.

5.3 Impact

'Impact' is a key imperative for WISERD's research, one that aligns with NPPEW Principle 1. 'Engagement is effectively designed to make a difference'. Research Councils UK[11] define 'impact' in the following ways:

- Academic impact - the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to academic advances, across and within disciplines, including significant advances in understanding, methods, theory and application;

- Economic and societal impacts - the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy. Economic and societal impacts embrace all the extremely diverse ways in which research-related knowledge and skills benefit individuals, organisations and nations by:

  - fostering global economic performance, and specifically the economic competitiveness of the United Kingdom,

  - increasing the effectiveness of public services and policy,

  - Enhancing quality of life, health and creative output.

The Economic and Social Research Council identifies three main types of impact:

- Instrumental: influencing the development of policy, practice or service provision, shaping legislation, altering behaviour

- Conceptual: contributing to the understanding of policy issues, reframing debates

- Capacity building: through technical and personal skill development.

Useful resources

- http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/impact-toolkit/

- http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/innovation/impacts/

5.4 Monitoring engagement

In furtherance of NPPEW Principles 4 & 10,[12] to the end of the WISERD CS programme (September 2019) there will be ongoing monitoring of WP delivery of engagement KPIs as part of WISERD CS annual summer review process. This will be overseen by P.I.s and Theme leaders in first instance. Progress will be summarised in internal Annual Reports. Oversight will be provided by the Executive. Given the dependence on research findings, it is noted that the timing of certain types of engagement activity will skewed to years 3, 4 and 5. This reflects the phased start dates of WPs in the WISERD CS

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[11] http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/innovation/impacts/

[12] Work with relevant partner organisations; Learn and share lessons to improve the process of engagement

programme. Learning and sharing lessons to improve the process of engagement can be done in a variety of ways – within work-packages, via the Research User Group and at Theme Meetings (for the WISERD CS Programme) and at away-days.

5.5 Researchfish © [13]

Engagement activities will be logged in www.researchfish.com - the database adopted by RCUK. Many of WISERD projects (including all WISERD Civil Society work packages) should seek to keep an up-to-date record of their engagement activities. The current input guidance on Researchfish states:

'You can record any details of activities that have engaged audiences in this section. Note that funding organisations have provided the following guidance for outputs you attribute to grants/awards:

Tell us about:

- *Activities supported or undertaken by you or a member of your research group/team*
- *Activities that relate specifically to funding from a grant listed under "my awards"*
- *Recurring activities (but only report them once)*

Do not tell us about:

- *Activities that were based on science or research in general*
- *Activities not specifically related to the research funding you are reporting against*

As noted, 'Policy Engagement' is a particular dimension to 'engagement'. Here Researchfish provides the following guidance for inputting a record of your engagement related to policy:

'You can record details about your influence on policy in this section. Note that funding organisations have provided the following guidance for outputs you attribute to grants/awards. In this section, your funders would like to capture details of any significant impact on policy or practice that has been realised as a result of your research. Research that has impacted on policy areas that effect health, society and the economy, such as housing, transport and schools should also be reported here.

Tell us about:

- *Policy/practice influenced at local, regional, national or international level- Influence on all policy or practice areas that affect society and the economy*
- *influences on systematic reviews, guidelines and policy documents (e.g. shaping recommendations)*
- *Training/educational developments (including courses and course material)*
- *Membership of and participation in advisory committees and/or government reviews*

Do not tell us about:

- *Training developments for undergraduate courses*

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[13] NB: this database is in its early stages. Online guidance and input procedures may change over time – please check https://www.researchfish.com

Webinars giving an overview of Researchfish are available at
https://www.researchfish.com/contact/webinar/pis

5.6 Research Networks

WISERD CS is committed to supporting research networks in areas relevant to civil society. These are valuable in fulfilling the Institute's engagement aims for, in addition to academic members they involve a range of stakeholders. Two networks are currently established: Language, Citizenship and Identity (Led by Professor Rhys Jones, Aberystwyth University) – and, Housing (Led by Dr Peter Mackie, Cardiff University).

In addition, colleagues working on the CS programme are encouraged to engage with two pre-existing external networks. The Voluntary Sector Studies Network (UK-based) http://www.vssn.org.uk/ and the International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR) International Networks http://www.istr.org/ (these are divided across 5 global regions: Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Middle East). Both are concerned with sharing knowledge and promoting research collaboration. They are comprised of a broad range of academic and other partners and present extensive opportunities for knowledge exchange and collaboration.

5.7 Research User Group

The RUG is a group of research users drawn from the public, private and voluntary sectors. Members will be kept abreast of WISERD research via e-mail updates/ newsletters. There will scheduled meetings of the Group. Its purpose is:

- Giving advice and feedback on research design
- Reading and giving feedback on research materials (e.g. questionnaires, interview schedules etc.)
- Commenting on research proposals
- Membership of project steering committees
- Potential Co-applicants on grant submissions

6.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

7.0 USEFUL INFORMATION

The Economic and Social Research Council provides a range of useful resources, including:

http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/impact-toolkit/what-how-and-why/public-engagement/important.aspx

The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement

http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/

RCUK Public Engagement with Research

http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/pe/

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Public Engagement Handbook

 http://www.oecd.org/document/20/0,3343,en_2649_33735_40755604_1_1_1_1,00.html

British Council - Public Engagement

http://www.britishcouncil.org/science-talking-science-public-engagement.htm

The ESRC/ Academy of Social Sciences

http://www.esrc.ac.uk/_images/Developing_Dialogue_tcm8-4628.pdf

Scottish Third Sector Research Forum

http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/our-work-partners/scottish-third-sector-research-forum/about-scottish-third-sector-research-forum/

www.publicengagement.ac.uk/explore-it/what-are-policy-drivers/concordat-engaging-publicwith-research

• A discussion of the economic value of public engagement:

www.britishscienceassociation.org/people-science-magazine/june-2012/economic-case-publicengagement

• A report on the social value of universities:
www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/80096_nccpe_social_value_report.pdf

• Planning for Change – Embedding Public Engagement Guidance:

www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/planning-change

APPENDIX A – Glossary -Types of Engagement Activity

WISERD Civil/Society Roadshows: The roadshows will facilitate wide-scale dissemination and communication of the WISERD/Civil Society research programme. It is intended that events will be used as a way of linking with cognate centres and third sector organisations.

Data Portal Roadshows: The Data Portal will be used as a dissemination tool in the WISERD/Civil Society programme. The portal will collate and disseminate, in an accessible format, information and research outputs relevant to civil society. The aim being to produce a database of civil society research. The roadshows will be used to promote the use of the data portal and provide training on how it can be accessed and utilised.

Public Engagement Events: These events will be designed to ensure that the general public is aware of, and engaged with, the Centre's research programme. Events will be held in the local community and will showcase research through a variety of presentations, visual and virtual media.

Evidence Symposia: A way of engaging policy, public and third sector colleagues with the Centre's research programme. These might include reports on evidence/ theory/ policy debates outlined at symposium event in a presentation by report author(s) with a response from/ discussion involving stakeholders.

Mini-Conferences: Typically a one day event, these conferences will bring together researchers from the centre with academics in the same field, policy, public, private and third sector researchers and practitioners.

WISERD Civil/Society Seminar Series: An annual seminar series, aimed at promoting engagement with research undertaken in the centre by academic researchers with an interest in the work of the Centre.

End of Project Workshops and Events: The Centre will hold a series of end of project workshops and events to disseminate findings from research projects to the academic community.

Annual National Conference: Two day conference open to researchers from all sectors and will include papers from both academic and non-academic colleagues.

Policy and Stakeholder Engagement Meetings: The remit of such meetings will vary (inter alia: building and strengthening links between the academic, public, private and third sectors; exploring potentialities for collaborative research; and facilitating engagement with research findings).

Knowledge Exchange Seminars: Seminars responsive to the interests of stakeholders/ policy specialists.

Thematic Group Networks: WISERD/Civil Society supports the activities of the Language, citizenship and identity Network and, the Housing Network. These include representatives drawn from academia, public, private, policy and third sectors. Network meetings discuss current and planned research, explore the potential for future collaborative and co-produced research and to discuss research development funding.

APPENDIX B – ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT – CONFERENCES

The following is a (non-exhaustive) list of conferences suited to dissemination of WISERD's research:

- The NCVO/ VSSN https://www.ncvo.org.uk/training-and-events/research-conference
- Policy & Politics Annual Conference http://www.bris.ac.uk/sps/policypolitcs/policyandpolitics2015/
- Regional Studies Assoc http://www.regionalstudies.org/conferences
- Social Pol Assoc http://www.social-policy.org.uk/what-we-do/conference/
- BERA https://www.bera.ac.uk/beraconference-2015
- ECER 2015 http://www.eera-ecer.de/ecer-2015-budapest/
- British Society of Gerontology Annual Conference http://www.britishgerontology.org/
- Work, Pensions and Labour Economics Study Group (WPEG) http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/economics/events/wpeg/conference
- RGS http://www.rgs.org/WhatsOn/ConferencesAndSeminars/Annual+International+Conference/Conference+theme.htm
- Assoc American Geographers http://www.aag.org/annualmeeting
- Royal Economic Society http://www.res.org.uk/view/conference.html
- Institute for Social and Economic Research https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/
- Gerontological Society of America https://www.geron.org/
- BSA http://www.britsoc.co.uk/events/bsa-annual-conference.aspx
- Political Studies Assoc PSA https://www.psa.ac.uk/conference/conference-highlights-2015
- Int Political Studies Assoc IPSA https://www.ipsa.org/world-congress-istanbul-2016
- ECPR European Consortium for Political Research http://www.ecpr.eu/
- ISA World Congress Sociology http://www.isa-sociology.org/congress2014/
- Law and Society http://www.lawandsociety.org/Seattle2015/seattle2015.html
- Council for European Studies http://councilforeuropeanstudies.org/conferences/2015-ces-conference
- European Conference on Politics and Gender http://www.ecpg.eu/research-methods-for-gender-and-politics.html
- NCRM http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/news/show.php?article=5403
- SRA http://the-sra.org.uk/events/
- The American Educational Research Association (AERA) http://www.aera.net/tabid/10208/Default.aspx
- American Political Science Association http://www.apsanet.org/

APPENDIX C – Literature on the Issues and Challenges associated with 'engagement'

Broadhead, R. S. (1976) Gatekeepers and the Social Control of Social Research, Social Problems vol:23 issue 3 pp. 325 -336;

Jongbloed, B., Enders, J. and Salerno, C. (2008) Higher education and its communities: Interconnections, interdependencies and a research agenda, Higher Education, 56, pp. 303–324;

Murdock, A. Shariff, R. Wilding, K. (2013) Knowledge exchange between academia and the third sector, Evidence & Policy: A Journal, Volume 9, Number 3, August 2013, pp. 419-430

Perkman, M. et al (2013) Academic engagement and commercialisation: A review of the literature on university–industry relations, Research Policy, Volume 42, Issue 2, Pages 423–442

Wanat, C. (2008) Getting Past the Gatekeepers: Differences Between Access and Cooperation in Public School Research, Field Methods, Vol. 29, No. 3, 45-64, DOI: 10.1177/1525822X07313811;