ParticipatoryResearch@Bath

Phase two project plan

December 2022

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Project overview

The second phase of the *ParticipatoryResearch@Bath* will run between 2022 and 2024 and will use the learnings from phase one to develop and deliver programmes of activity with researchers and community groups. Managing the project, the Public Engagement Unit will take a culture change approach to the work. Using their decades worth of experience in this field the team will aim to create and enhance the conditions for participatory research to flourish at the University of Bath.

Project context and drivers

There is an increased focus by funders and decision makers on bringing research and society closer together. Over the last few years this new emphasis has been demonstrated with a range of new strategies and funding calls, including:

- UKRI strategy *2022 to 2027: transforming tomorrow together*
- Engineering and Physical Science Research Council's (EPSRC) focus on responsible innovation and public engagement that is a two-way process
- UKRI's public engagement strategy: *Research and innovation* for all and the various UKRI funding calls through the Public Engagement Team including the Enhancing Place-based Public Engagement and Citizen Science Collaboration grant schemes and the Community Research Network and Community Knowledge Fund
- Wellcome/British Science Association Ideas Fund
- The National Institute for Health Research's (NIHR) longstanding commitment to PPI and recent Developing Innovative, Inclusive and Diverse Public Partnerships call.

The drivers for this include accountability, improving research quality, research being used and usable, trustworthy research, and improving the diversity of those in the research and innovation landscape. These drivers themselves are not new, but the increased emphasis on them *is* new.

It must be assumed that these top-level shifts in focus will trickle down to how research proposals are awarded. We've seen this with medical research (NIHR making PPI compulsory) and EPSRC guidance for proposal development, particularly under its Healthcare Technologies theme, for 'collaborative' research that involves the public and patients.

To maximise the opportunities of this emerging emphasis in research funding, the University needs to ensure its systems and those of wider society are 'fit for purpose' for meaningful citizen involvement in research proposals and throughout the research process, embracing the opportunities of responsible research and innovation.

Effective involvement of people outside of academia is also critical for ensuring that research is taken up by broader society. Recognising that achieving demonstrable impact of research can take years, now is the time for investment ahead of the next REF.

Learnings from *ParticipatoryResearch@Bath* phase one

Over phase one of *ParticipatoryResearch@Bath* (March to August 2022) we:

- Mapped participatory research and public and patient involvement practice at the University
- Conducted semi-structured interviews with researchers practising participatory approaches to their research and created a number of case studies to showcase their work
- Worked with the Young Foundation and delivered training sessions on working with communities on research projects
- Carried out desk and interview-based research with colleagues from across the higher education sector and beyond to understand the features of high-quality participatory research and public and patient involvement practice
- Worked with community groups and organisations across Bath and North East Somerset to better understand the needs of people outside the University and the potential barriers and enablers of participating in research projects through a community listening exercise
- Carried out small-scale pilot initiatives to broker relationships between community groups and researchers

Detailed reports from some of this work can be found on the *ParticipatoryResearch@Bath* project page.

The conclusions of the Phase One work were as follows:

Participatory research as an approach or mindset, is not consistently defined and is not used equally across all disciplines.

There was a desire for greater institutional support from researchers to enable them to meaningfully involve citizens in their work. There needs to be 'participatory-ready' systems, knowledge and people within the University. This requires:

- training and professional development programmes
- a community of practice
- knowledgeable support in professional services
- effective financial systems
- funding to carry out activities in the pre-award phase of developing research proposals
- identifying mechanisms for recognition that go beyond paying people

There are limited access points to the University for communities and public groups and their perceptions of the University are often limited by that experience. There is very little individual or collective understanding of research by those outside of academia. What research is, how it's funded, who does it, who benefits from it, and who regulates it are largely invisible. We have an opportunity to cultivate 'research-ready' communities outside of the University. Relationships need to move from a transactional approach to involving people in research to a relational approach. This means:

- building trust,
- running initiatives and programmes that are for communities without an obvious end goal in mind,
- having a person (or team) whose role it is to build those relations who can be the access point to the University
- opening up what the University does (beyond teaching undergraduates), in particular being clear what research is, how it is conducted etc.

These findings are not surprising based on what was already known about participatory research practice at the University, as well as from other institutions. However, there were some emergent findings that feel novel for the sector and for the University:

1. There is a high degree of emotional labour involved in those research projects that are authentically participatory, yet the support structures for those involved feel underdeveloped. This is perhaps most obvious where research is exploring traumatic or challenging life experiences, however, the simple act of sustaining a relationship is hard in and of itself especially when it's done in a professional capacity (a member of staff in a university) and a personal capacity (a local resident with e.g., experience of homelessness).
2. Much of the focus for work on participatory research is on the conduct of research projects themselves and this is well understood with associated bodies of knowledge. However, research projects are embedded in a broader system which includes funding, governance, impact (and reward through the REF and allocation of QR funding). It is much less well understood as to how participatory principles can / should be embedding into the wider system.

Project description

In the light of the findings of the first phase of *ParticipatoryResearch@Bath* , in the second phase we favour a programme of activities that focuses on creating and enhancing the conditions for participatory research to flourish at the University of Bath. To do this we will work with researchers and professional services at the University and local and relevant communities to develop and deliver programmes. This will include:

- Delivering a programme of activities for researchers to support them to develop their capacities and capabilities for carrying out participatory research
- Developing and delivering initiatives with/by/for communities to build better relationships and to better understand their needs
- Investigating the emotional labour of researchers and citizens contributing to participatory research projects and piloting approaches to support people's welfare and wellbeing
- Carrying out an action research project to explore the features of embedding participatory approaches across the wider research system

The learning and outputs from the second phase of *ParticipatoryResearch@Bath* will inform changes to the institutional activities and processes at the University of Bath to ensure researchers are supported to undertake participatory research with communities.

The approach we're adopting and why

The proposed approach to *ParticipatoryResearch@Bath* is to foster a culture change towards participatory research at the University. The work will be delivered by the Public Engagement Unit steered by an Advisory Group of academics from across disciplines at the University, representatives from community groups, funders and public engagement/PPI professionals from external organisations.

Our approach will build on a decade's worth of experience in delivering culture change initiatives. The Work Packages listed below are based on proven approaches to supporting culture change. The Public Engagement Unit has significant experience in delivering all of these types of initiatives.

Participatory research "involves people whose lives are the subject of study in some or all aspects of research design, process, dissemination, and impact, with a focus on generating socially just change[1,] "

Because of these very real sensitivities around participatory research, and the potential of doing harm to those involved, we are taking the time to ensure we get our work, supporting researchers and communities outside the University, right.

The Public Engagement Unit, with support and guidance from an Advisory Group, will lead the project to embed a focus on creating sustained and sustainable change in the systems we have influence over at the University.

The nature of participatory approaches to research means that there must be mechanisms to ensure that the work can be sustained beyond this initial funded stage. The Public Engagement Unit commit to sustaining this work and embedding the approaches into their current and future programmes of work.

Project outline

Aims

To create and enhance the conditions that enable the practice of participatory co-produced research at the University of Bath to flourish.

Objectives

The *ParticipatoryResearch@Bath* project will be delivered over five work packages.

WP1 Project management

- Deliver work packages 2-5
- Share findings and gather input to the work through existing University systems
- Establish an Advisory Group
- Evaluate the project and report to the University via the Research Culture Working Group and to Research England

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[1] [1] Banks, S. and Brydon-Miller, M. (2019) Ethics in Participatory Research for Health and Social Well-being. Cases and Commentaries. Routledge, London P1

- Anticipate and manage risks

WP2 Capacity and capability within the University
- Establish a community of practice / network of those interested in participatory research
- Work with external providers to develop and deliver a programme of training and professional development opportunities on participatory research principles and practice
- Manage a funding scheme at the pre-award phase of developing research proposals
- Work with Finance to ensure systems of financial recompense are effective for communities and citizen's involvement in research
- Work with the University's NIHR Participate Network and develop a community of research-interested public groups and citizens

WP3 Relationship building
- Work with the Head of Community Engagement to develop and deliver a programme of activities with and for communities to understand their needs, and to develop understanding of how engaging with our research can support their own work
- Develop a communications programme to share information about the University and its work with communities
- Work with community networks such as 3SG and Twerton and Whiteway Community Network to support the above and explore their potential role as brokers

WP4 Emotional labour of research
- Commission desk-based and empirical research to develop a "state of the nation" report on the issues / risks regarding wellbeing and welfare in relational / participatory approaches
- Embed welfare, wellbeing and safeguarding into our work from the outset by understanding what the risks are and identifying approaches / tools etc that we use to do this
- Make recommendations of how to proactively support people in participatory activities
- Implement and evaluate those recommendations

WP5 Embedding participatory approaches across the wider research system
- Commission a review of participatory approaches across the research system
- Review those approaches and make recommendations as to where to implement them in the University of Bath
- Pilot participatory approaches at one or two points in the research system e.g. participatory grant making or ethical assessment

Anticipated outcomes
- The culture of participatory research at the University of Bath is better understood
- The needs of people and public groups outside the University for participating in participatory research are better understood

- Researchers will develop and enhance the skills, knowledge and understanding of participatory techniques associated with participatory research approaches
- Community groups will develop and enhance the skills, knowledge and understanding of being involved in and engaging with research
- Community groups feel empowered in their relationships with researchers as well as with the University
- There is a deeper understanding of the features of good practice that enable and facilitate participatory research at an institutional level
- There are fewer barriers for researchers and communities to working on participatory research projects
- Researchers are more aware of the support available to develop participatory research projects

Expected outputs

The following are some of the expected outputs from the delivery of the Work Packages highlighted above:

- A network of researchers who use participatory research approaches
- A package of training and resources
- Funded participatory research projects
- Streamlined payment systems and associated guidance
- A portfolio of community relationship building programmes
- A report on participatory approaches across the whole research system
- A report on initiatives piloting participatory approaches across two parts of the research system
- A report on 'emotional labour'
- Guidance on welfare and wellbeing of 'emotional labour'
- Presentations at conferences and sector events
- Blogs sharing findings and learnings
- Case studies

Project team

- **Project Lead**: Helen Featherstone, Head of Public Engagement
- **Operational lead**: Dean Veall, Deputy Head of Public Engagement
- **Project Manager**: position vacant (0.5 FTE from January 2023 to July 2024)
- **Project Officer**: position vacant (0.6 FTE from March 2023 to July 2024)
- **Administrator**: Rob Cooper, Public Engagement Officer (0.5 FTE from November 2022)

Budget

Total project cost for two years of ParticipatoryResearch@Bath is anticipated to be £207,239. This includes the c. £172,000 Research England Participatory Research funding allocation. In 2022/23 this is £86,230 and is anticipated to be the same level in 2023/24.

Research England have guaranteed funding for academic year 2023/23 and 2023/24 as part of the Participatory Research funding allocation. The Public Engagement Unit will also allocate £35,000 to the project from its core budget. Below are the categories of costs for the project budget:

Category	Research England budget	PEU Budget	Total costs
Staffing costs	£82,688.38	£0.00	£82,688.38
Community-based activities	£5,000.00	£15,000.00	£20,000.00
Seed fund grant call	£44,000.00	£0.00	£44,000.00
Commissioned research	£15,400.00	£0.00	£15,400.00
Pilot participatory initiatives	£15,960.00	£0.00	£15,960.00
Training	£0.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Advisory Group costs	£0.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Materials and design	£5,000.00	£0.00	£5,000.00
Contingency costs	£4,190.62	£0.00	£4,190.62
Total	**£172,239.00**	**£35,000.00**	**£207,239.00**

Risks

Participatory approaches necessitate personal relationship building. Relationships are built on trust. The two-year funding limit is problematic as relationships take time to build and are easily damaged if external funding is withdrawn and roles / activities come to an end. If this happens this will do far more damage to the reputation of the University than doing nothing in the first place.

The Public Engagement Unit and the Head of Community Engagement will act as the backbone of this relationship-building work and will be in a position to sustain the work (albeit in a form that is likely to be different to this phase) once the funding ends. We will work on a business case to the University to secure additional internal allocations (pay and non-pay) to sustain this work.

Communications

The Public Engagement Unit blog will host posts sharing some of the learning from the project. Various internal communication channels managed centrally by the Communications Team will be utilised to promote opportunities to colleagues across the University.

Monitoring and evaluation

A monitoring and evaluation framework will be co-created with the *ParticipatoryResearch@Bath* Advisory Group. The project will be reporting to University's Research Culture Working Group.

Milestones

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
WP1 – project management	Integrate with other UoB committees etc								
	Report to Funder				X				X
	External Advisory Group	X	X	X	X		X		X
	Sharing learning e.g., Engage			X				X	
WP2 – UoB Cap and Cab	Establishing a network of those interested in PR		X						
	Developing / delivering a programme of training		X	X	X		X		
	Establish funding programme for relationship building before and during grant-writing		X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Look at the financial systems to see if / how they can be streamlined			X	X				
	Participant community				X	X	X	X	X
WP3 – relationship building	Continue existing relationships	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	X
	Build relationships with intermediaries			x	x	x	x	x	x
	Prepare insight documents				X			X	
WP4 Welfare and Wellbeing	Desk and empirical research	X	X	X					
	State of the nation report			X					
	Develop and implement welfare activities			X	X	X	X	X	X
	Evaluate and report experiences								
WP5 embedding participatory approaches	Research system			X					
	Review existing approaches				X				
	Pilot novel participatory approaches					X	X	X	X