

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2012-17

Strategic context

The School's overarching vision under the 2012-17 Strategy is to be a world-leading school of public and global health. Its mission is to improve health equity worldwide through three main activities: excellence in research, education, and knowledge translation into policy and practice. Values including excellence and creativity, sharing expertise, openness in partnership working and equity and diversity are crucial to achieve a supportive and scientifically rigorous working culture.

Public Engagement ethos and purpose

Public engagement encompasses activities and projects that allow for open communication and two-way dialogue between researchers and members of the public. Public engagement should be embedded in the School's main areas of activity and enhance them, reflecting the School's local and international presence and core values. Good-quality engagement creates an atmosphere of trust and brings benefits for all involved.

As a publicly-funded institution, the School has a responsibility to share its public health work with public groups in a transparent way. Research at the School examines factors that determine health outcomes for people around the world, and engaging closely with individuals and communities to draw upon their experiences can produce knowledge and outputs that are useful for all involved.

The expansion of public engagement activity both in the UK and abroad is important to:

- enhance research processes and outcomes to achieve wider benefits
- enrich the skills and confidence of staff and students
- facilitate the exchange of public health knowledge and ideas.

Annex 1 introduces the **values** that should underpin quality public engagement activity at the School, and Annex 2 the **guiding principles** that sit alongside them.

Vision statement

We will create an inspiring, inclusive and diverse culture of public engagement, transforming our research and learning through genuine dialogue with defined local and global communities. By 2017 we will have developed a rich programme of rewarding activities led by school staff, students and the public across a wide range of research areas.

Our goals

Goal 1: Create a rich programme of activities to stimulate public health knowledge and discussions

We will:

- Expand engagement opportunities offered to students and staff
- Create and publicise tools, including web pages with practical resources, links to funding sources and case studies, to encourage public engagement activity both in the UK and abroad
- Develop a public engagement reporting mechanism to monitor levels of activity and collect data for case studies
- Work in partnership with public groups and other organisations which share our commitment to improving public health research, teaching and knowledge translation.

Goal 2: Motivate and support staff and students to engage

Support & learning

We will:

- Organise more support to increase activity opportunities and provide advice, helping to combat staff and students' time constraints
- Streamline public engagement goals across other External Relations activities
- Provide information about funding
- Champion public engagement prominently across the School to increase student participation and confidence levels
- Support research managers and PIs to include time for PE within staff time allocated for research projects.

Training

We will:

- Create public engagement training sessions in partnership with the Talent and Educational Development team, with reference to Vitae's *Researcher Development Framework*.

Recognition

We will:

- Feed into the development of 'citizenship' at the School to integrate engagement with job descriptions, research degree students' degree lifecycle and appraisal processes
- Organise events to facilitate networking, exchange ideas and celebrate success.

Goal 3: Transform our research and learning through genuine dialogue

We will:

- Share examples of engagement activities both with staff and other organisations that show how public engagement can improve the quality of research, and that there is a genuine need for it
- Create frameworks for evaluation and impact assessment to support project planning and implementation.

Engagement with public groups

Public engagement activities and projects will be undertaken on the basis of need, relevance and genuine benefit for both staff and students and public groups. Based on discussions and research with staff and students, we have identified these engagement priorities:

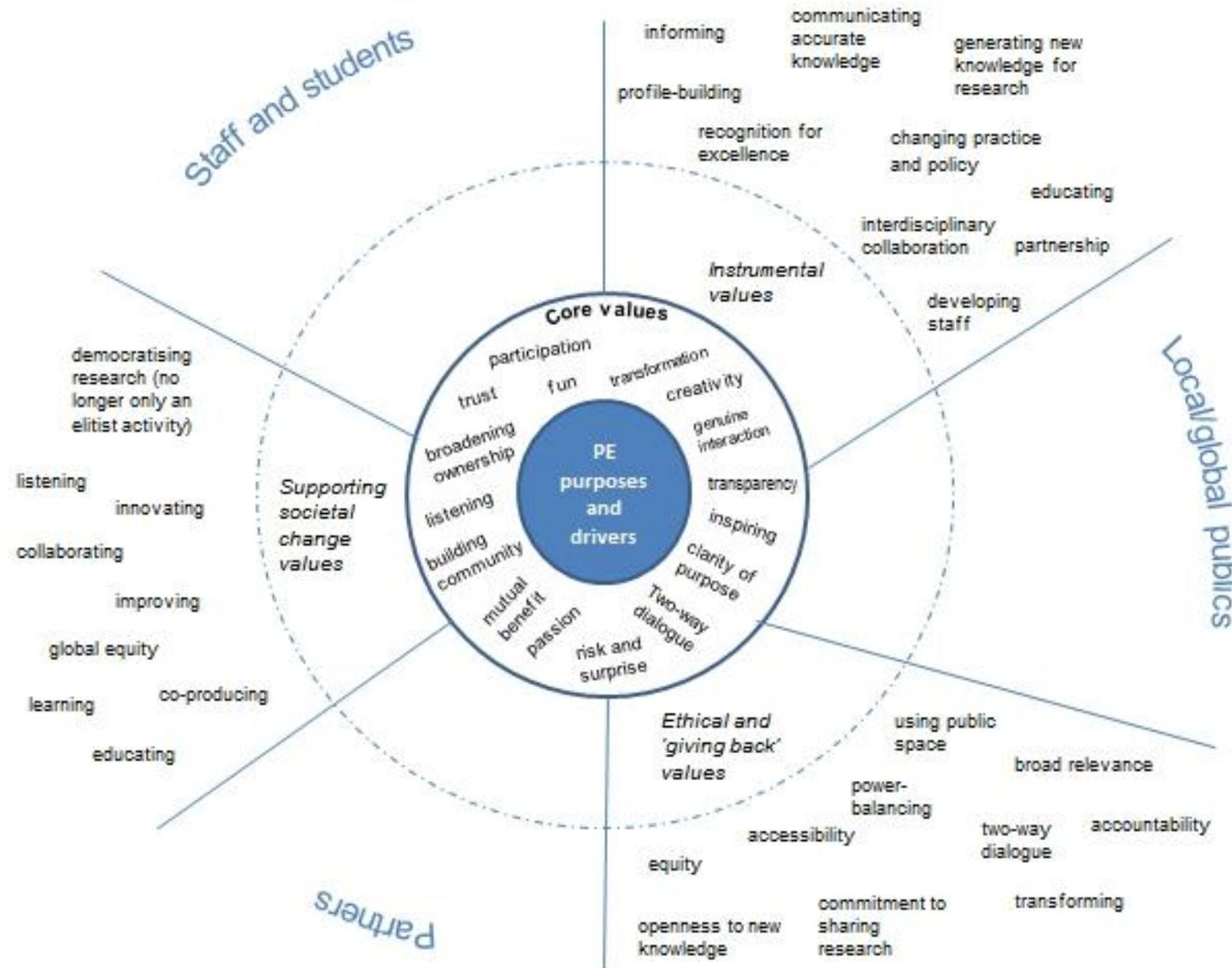
- Involving groups that are participating in School research both in the UK and abroad
- Encouraging dialogue with key public health stakeholders (policy makers, NGOs, practitioners) to enrich research, knowledge translation and evidence-based practice
- Bringing benefits to communities, schools and organisations in the School's immediate vicinity (Camden, Westminster, Islington)
- Collaborating with arts and humanities specialists to explore science and research from different perspectives
- Welcoming public groups to the London School to share our unique space, history and archival collections.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Public Engagement Advisory Group, which meets once per term, will monitor the implementation of this strategy and discuss new ideas and any issues regarding its development as they arise.

Annex 1: Values Wheel

These values were the outputs from a public engagement advisory group visioning workshop in November 2012. The values wheel has been created as a tool to help staff and students think through the values that will inform their projects, and the impact that they are looking for.



Annex 2

Guiding principles

Guiding principles can sit alongside values to help plan and evaluate activities, ensuring that projects are being undertaken for the right reasons.

- **Clarity** on aims and scope of the activity from the beginning, and how outputs will be used (frame with participants to promote trust)
- **Early involvement** for public groups and opportunity to contribute to planning
- **Accessibility** for those who wish to take part (allowing participants to self-select)
- **Appropriate** activity formats; engaging the right audiences based on what they will need and value
- **Respectful and open** discussions, allowing all parties to listen, ask questions and be questioned
- **Experimentation and evolution** within projects; no predetermined outcomes.