

Manchester Beacon for Public Engagement

Connecting people, place and knowledge



Welcome to an update on the progress and activities of the Manchester Beacon for Public Engagement. The Manchester Beacon is one of six Beacon partnerships across the UK. There is also a National Coordinating Centre that shares learning across the Higher Education Sector:

The Beacons explore and support the many ways that the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with, and informed by, the public.

The Manchester Beacon is a partnership between the University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University, the University of Salford, the Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI) and Manchester: Knowledge Capital.



What we do

The Manchester Beacon facilitates staff, students and community groups to create a culture that encourages public and community engagement to become a valued part of everyday university life. We engage participants to influence culture change, develop creative learning partnerships and attract local audiences. This is an overview of the many activities, collaborations and events we have supported, the learning so far and the challenges still ahead.

We do this by

Our approach focuses on networking, collaboration and celebrating and sharing learning. Here are some examples...

Culture Change Labs

Create time and space for senior staff to share and explore the vision, priorities and challenges for supporting public engagement within their institutions.

Community Science Awards

Collaborative awards inspire public engagement projects between academics and culturally diverse community groups for the Manchester Science Festival.

Early Career Researchers Awards

Opportunities for researchers at an early stage in their careers to work with and learn from experienced public engagement practitioners from different sectors, organisations and communities.

Mapping Creativity

The Manchester public chose a project to address Manchester's local needs. ArcSpace Manchester, the winning project, is a social enterprise run by local artists and academics, linking the creative industries, community groups and academic knowledge to promote sustainable living.

Evaluating Impact

A bespoke evaluation and monitoring framework and support pack were created to measure success and gather learning, with the input of participants in the programme.

Sharing and Celebrating Learning

Annual Beacon Summit and dissemination events bring people together to share learning, showcase achievements and shape future plans.

Community Leadership

Step Up and Inspiring Leaders build leadership skills with Manchester residents to build the capacity of community organisations.

University of Manchester Development Awards and Manchester Metropolitan

University Fellowships support the long-term goal of valuing public engagement as part of everyday university life.

University of Salford Networking Lunches

and **Crescent Network** bring together staff, students and the public to share knowledge and share best practice.

The Beacon is an engine for cultural change and is enabling us to make connections and embed public engagement across the university.





An independent Interim Evaluation based on consultation with partners, stakeholders, community organisations and participants across 30 projects highlights the learning so far.

Influencing culture change

- Participants report an increase in skills
- Public engagement more valued
- Positive impact on university strategy plans and policies to support PE

Engaging participants and new audiences

- More staff and students involved
- Community perceptions of universities more positive
- Learning and personal benefits reported by participants

Developing creative learning partnerships

- New relationships built with deeper, broader partnership working
- Partnerships shaped by shared learning
- More networks created linking between universities and local communities

Progress so far.....

“ I will definitely re-think my approach to research in terms of why and who I could involve with what I do. My experience of working directly with the local community has had a huge impact on my thinking about the potential of my work outside its usual and expected application – this is really inspiring! ”

Future priorities

The Interim Evaluation also highlighted some priorities for the future

..... **Making a difference**
Understand how and why we've made a difference and communicate the learning widely

..... **Partnership**
Build deeper partnerships and explore collaborative opportunities

..... **Sustainability**
Sustain momentum and connections beyond the Beacon initiative

..... **Recognise and support**
Demonstrate the value, incentivise and encourage public engagement

Get involved

Join the network, showcase your work, share resources and find out more at www.manchesterbeacon.org or contact one of the Manchester Beacon team:

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The Manchester Beacon is a partnership between the University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University, the University of Salford, the Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI) and Manchester: Knowledge Capital.

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With thanks to the many staff, students, community and public partners involved in the programme so far.

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Cover image: 'Transforming Guns into Goods' event at the Manchester Science Festival.