

# AHRC Creative Communities

## Toolkit Module 2: Communicating Innovation: How to share and profile your research

The **Creative Communities Toolkit** unlocks programme learning for creative communities, empowering them to tackle shared challenges through new cultural R&D and to better engage with cross-sector stakeholders in collaborative methodologies.

This Creative Communities Module can help you to understand different ways to communicate impact and engage diverse audiences.



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## What are the potential benefits of sharing your research?

1

### COHESION

To bring people together



2

### INFLUENCING

To influence policy or practice

3

### CHANGE MAKING

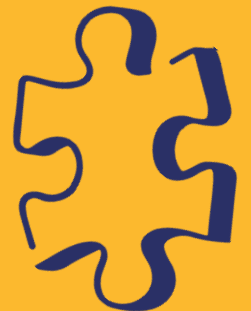
To raise awareness or change something



4

### ACTIVATION

To start a campaign or create capacity



# What are the potential benefits of sharing your research?

## Academic Opportunities

- Social media and online engagement through blogs or website posts
- Mobilise existing networks to share your learning
- Media and podcasts – find out more in our **Podcasting Creative Communities blog** and listen to the **Creative Communities Podcast series**, which shared cultural R&D in communities in devolved contexts across the UK
- Taking part in online events, seminars and conferences
- Read how our Community Innovation Practitioners did this in their series of **case studies**



## Informing Policy Making

- Reach out to your MP, MSP, MLA or MS
- Search for local and national policy makers who work in your area of interest, or politicians who are part of committees, All-party groups, or who have spoken on your area of interest, and reach out to them via email to share your work and ask for a meeting
- Contribute to calls for evidence, inquiries and consultations: find out more about doing this for **UK Parliament**, **Scottish Parliament**, **Northern Ireland Assembly** or **The Senedd**
- Organise an event in **UK Parliament**, **Scottish Parliament**, **Northern Ireland Assembly** or **The Senedd**



## Informing Wider Society

- Reach out to and take part in local community groups
- Share your work through local notice boards, media or local radio with a key ask for community to get in touch
- Check out useful resources to fund activities and find existing networks, including **National Lottery Community Fund**, **Local Trust** and **Community Research Networks**
- Find out more about opportunities and challenges of delivering a place-based approach in this **Scottish Parliament Culture in Communities** report



## Engaging the Media

- Raise profile of your work through social media and tag local/national media organisations or reach out online
- Write a press release with headline information about your work and share with relevant media organisations – check out these helpful ‘how to’ guides from **Local Trust** and **Charity Digital**, and useful **Style Guide shared by Culture Collective**
- Create your own podcast or reach out to podcasters who cover relevant areas – find out how we did this in our **Podcasting Creative Communities** blog and listen to the UK-wide **Creative Communities Podcast series**



## Also consider different forms of dissemination:

### Written content:

**Academic papers or books:** Best targeted at the academic community, the advantages are sharing and advancing new knowledge in an environment that encourages learning and innovation, and building a scholarly community. Disadvantages are that it is quite formal in its structure, and would have limited audience beyond academics.

**Case Study:** A more accessible format, this could be targeted at cross-sector partners, and has the advantage of sharing in depth examples from real-life settings. Disadvantages are that it is subjective and can be difficult to generalise findings.

**Journalism:** Advantages include reaching a broad audience, which can be targeted at the publication's readership. Disadvantages could include that it's difficult to include more detailed findings in this shorter format.

**Blog:** Advantages include ability to self-publish via your organisation's website or social media, disadvantages include that it might not reach a broad audience beyond those already engaged with your work.



### AHRC Creative Communities Example:

A series of **case studies** from the Community Innovation Practitioners, which provide evidence on the value of cross-sector partnership working to deliver cultural innovation and community cohesion in devolved contexts.



### Visual content:

**Graphic illustrations:** This visual record of an event, conference or research output, can visualise ideas clearly and simply in an impactful way with illustrations and colour, bringing key messages and themes to life. Disadvantages include that they require specialised skills and can be time-consuming to create, as well as being difficult to capture more detailed information.



AHRC Creative Communities used visual minutes to illustrate opportunities, challenges and policy solution suggestions at our 4 nations **Policy Labs** series, in devolved contexts in **Scotland**, **Wales**, **Northern Ireland**, **London** and the **North East**.

## Spoken content:

**Presentation:** Has the advantage that the approach can be adapted so that your research impact is tailored to fit your target audience, be it academic, policy makers, or cross-sector partners. This format can effectively convey information and engage audiences. A disadvantage could be that your audience do not take away all of the key information.



**TED Talk:** Provide inspiring content with both brevity and depth, and can appeal to a broad cross-sector audience through online dissemination. Disadvantages are that they do not invite debate or balanced viewpoints.

**Vlog:** A video blog can help to create a personal connection with your target audience, as it can be more engaging than text, and is a social media friendly format, and can boost your visibility. Disadvantages include that producing high-quality vlogs can be time-intensive, and could be costly with the need for editing tools.

**Podcast:** Podcasts can be very engaging to listen to, help broaden your reach, and are accessible to listeners as they can tune in when they want to. Disadvantages are that creating a podcast series can be time consuming, and requires specialist equipment and technical resources.

## Solo or collaborative work:

**Solo work:** This has the advantages that you have more control over outputs and time frames, but the disadvantage that you are not part of a collaborative community, which could enable richer discussion, findings and teamwork to share the work of disseminating research impacts.

**Collaborative work:** This has the advantages of bringing multiple perspectives, sharing workload, and more people to contribute to and share research impacts. It has the disadvantages of higher risk to outputs and time frames, if not all contributors are equally motivated.

## AHRC Creative Communities Example:

Policy solution suggestions were co-created by participants at the **AHRC Creative Communities Policy Labs**, in a collaborative approach which led to broad-ranging policy recommendations, socialised at the 4 nations Policy Sprints in devolved contexts. [Read the final papers online.](#)



## Find out more about how this can work in practice:

### Academic Communities



UKRI Impact Acceleration Accounts (IAAs) are strategic awards providing funding to research organisations to use creatively for a wide range of impact activities. Find out more about [\*\*opportunities, support and resources\*\*](#) available.

The [\*\*NCCPE\*\*](#) advocates for the role of public and community engagement in building a more inclusive higher education sector. Read about the [\*\*NCCPE and the Young Foundation's\*\*](#) UKRI-funded project, which explored the learning and development needs for those involved in community research partnerships and produced recommendations for those supporting community engagement in research.

The [\*\*National Civic Impact Accelerator's\*\*](#) mission is to assist universities throughout the UK to establish effective collaborations with other stakeholders to benefit their local communities. Check out their toolkit on [\*\*Equitable Partnerships for Civic Engagement\*\*](#).

### Community Organisations



Our [\*\*Community Innovation Practitioners\*\*](#) 2023/24 applied co-creation in their creative communities across the 4 nations to address shared goals. Their research was published in innovative ways as [\*\*case studies, policy papers\*\*](#) and [\*\*podcasts\*\*](#), which was welcomed and celebrated by their partners and community groups.

[\*\*'Involve'\*\*](#) work to make public participation and deliberation an everyday part of our democracy. Their [\*\*Knowledge Base\*\*](#) provides a range of helpful guides on setting up participatory processes, digital engagement, facilitation and evaluation.

[\*\*Citizens UK\*\*](#) brings people together to win change through community organising. Find out more about their [\*\*leadership training opportunities\*\*](#).

## Policy Makers



The AHRC Creative Communities 2024 4 nations **Policy Labs** – a series of creatively facilitated policy shops with governments, policy makers, cross-sector participants, communities and young people – took place across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Mayoral Authorities in England.

Policy Provocation Papers developed from policy solution suggestions co-created at the Policy labs were socialised at the AHRC Creative Communities 4 nations 2024-25 **Policy Sprints**, in collaboration with **Scottish Parliament**, **Wales Innovation Network**, **Northern Ireland Assembly**, and **Darlington Economic Campus**.

The final **Devolution Policy Provocation Papers** present actionable propositions shared with devolved and central UK governments, arms length bodies and cross-sector stakeholders.

## Media



The results of the **AHRC Creative Communities Community Innovation Practitioner Awards 2023/24** were shared with media via a **press release** and a number of high-profile blogs, including with **WonkHE**, **UKRI**, **Arts Professional** and **National Centre for Academic and Cultural Exchange** to raise awareness of the research outcomes.

The Community Innovation Practitioners also held a **Research Showcase online**:

## AHRC Creative Communities

### Community Innovation Practitioner 2023-24 Research Showcase Webinar



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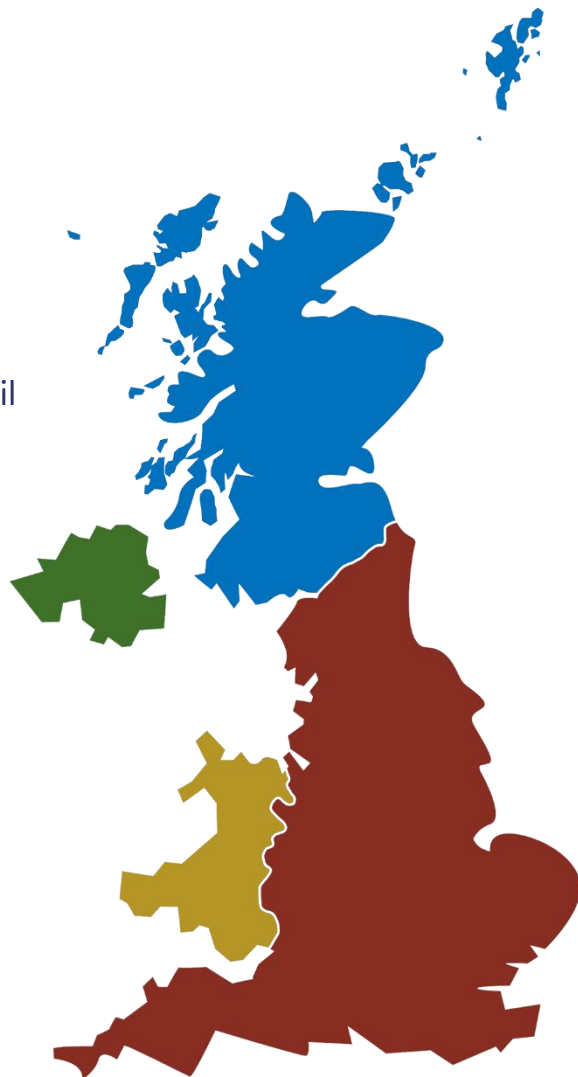
## Place and Impact:

Arts Councils provide helpful culture resources and funding across the 4 nations: find out more at

**Arts Council England**, **Creative Scotland**,  
**Arts Council of Northern Ireland**, and **Arts Council of Wales**.

The **Department for Culture, Media and Sport** supports culture, arts, media, sport, tourism and civil society across every part of England. Find out more about their latest resources and information on **Society and Culture** and **Housing, local and community**.

If you live in a devolved area, **find out more** about culture devolution and the culture strategies in the 3 nations and Mayoral Strategic Authorities in England.



## Remember to think about your time frame and any time constraints for sharing your research impacts:

Policy engagement and sustained awareness raising can take considerable time and planning, whereas using social media or self-publishing a blog can be much quicker solutions, provided you still have a plan for why you are posting, what you are saying and who you want to reach.

## Ready to learn more?

There are 4 Modules in the AHRC Creative Communities Toolkit – you can find them all on our website:

**[www.creativecommunities.uk](http://www.creativecommunities.uk)**

**Module 1:** Community R&D: How to take part in cultural research and development as a creative community

**Module 3:** Best practice in sustaining cross-sector collaborations

**Module 4:** Co-Creating Culture Policy

