

**Vitae EE Hub and CUE East:
Eastern Region colloquium on Public Engagement with research
29th November 2010
Homerton Conference Centre, Cambridge**

Event overview

The EE Hub hosted this event jointly with the Community University Engagement East (CUE East). CUE East is one of six higher education national Beacons for Public Engagement (the Beacons), four year pilots from 2008 – 2012. The Beacons are leading the effort to foster a change of culture in universities, assisting staff and students to engage with the public. They aim to provide an informed climate within which universities are all better able to improve quality of life, support social and economic regeneration and inculcate civic values.



Julie Worrall. Project Director. CUE East

The workshop offered participants the chance to increase their understanding of public engagement and enabled the sharing of ideas relating to some of the issues surrounding the impact of research. The event aimed to enable institutions to actively use public engagement as a way to develop and enhance transferable skills for researchers.

The workshop was designed to enable more of a dialogue to help us all to reflect on attitudes, perceptions, motivations, challenges and the skills that are needed to do engagement well. Participants had the opportunity to explore what exactly is Public Engagement, why should researchers engage with public understanding, and how to illustrate the impact of a research.

The meeting was opened by Dr. Rodney Day (EE Hub Co-ordinator) and started with a presentation from Julie Worrall, Project Director, CUE East. Julie's presentation focused on what is meant by Public Engagement and why it matters. The participants found this event highly interesting with 67% awarding the presentation the highest score on the feedback forms. Please see the presentation by Julie Worrall for more details.



Angela Rippon from the University of East Anglia.

The presentation by Julie was followed by an activity using an Audience Response System. The workshop audience were able to participate in a discussion activity to gauge the audience's perceptions of and attitudes towards specific questions and data on engagement with research. This was followed by a facilitated discussion on the responses. This session was led by Julie Worrall and Angela Rippon from the University of East Anglia.

After Lunch there was a series of presentations from those within the sector who have been involved in public engagement with research activities.

These presentations focused on engagement in practice and lessons from the field for researcher development.

The presenters were:

- Dr Sharon Hall, Head of External Relations, Rothamsted Research, who spoke about engaging the public in agricultural science. 78% of participants found this talk highly helpful and 78% highly interesting.
- Professor Colin Haslam, University of Hertfordshire, spoke about academic research and engaging with stakeholders. 56% of participants found this talk highly helpful and 67% highly interesting.
- Dr. Suzanne Walker, University of East Anglia, who gave a presentation entitled "Engaging the Public: No Way Back". 57% of participants found this talk highly helpful and 68% highly interesting.



Dr. Suzanne Walker from the University of East Anglia.



The presentations are attached and can also be downloaded from the event listing on the EE Hub web page:

<http://www.vitae.ac.uk/EEhub>

Dr. Sharon Hall, Rothamsted Research



Presentation by Professor Colin Haslam, University of Hertfordshire

Following the presentations there was a Q &A session with the presenters.

A second activity was led by Liane Ward (CUE East) and Julie Worrall. Using questions from community partners and members of the public filmed by CUE East on a range of topics to gauge what is important to the public about research and engagement, there was a facilitated discussion on how the workshop audience would approach responding to these questions. The workshop participants then compared the perceptions identified by the first activity with those demonstrated by the public in the filmed questions.

The analysis of the feedback forms show that 55% of the participants found the workshop highly helpful with 35% rating the event as moderately to highly helpful. The participants rated the event very interesting, with 66% rating the event highly interesting and 21% rating the event moderately to highly interesting. The morning activity was well received with 44% rating the activity highly helpful and 89% highly interesting.

The workshop closed at 3.30pm.