



The ESRC Festival of Social Science: Learning and success

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Executive summary

The ESRC's Festival of Social Science showcases the diversity and relevance of social science research, enabling over 500 researchers – primarily ESRC-funded – to communicate with new audiences. These include business, charities, government, teenagers, pensioners and parents. Today the Festival encompasses diverse events throughout the UK, many with a highly regional focus, and the number has grown steadily, from approximately 80 events in 2006 to over 120 in 2010.

This report documents the successes of the Festival and the lessons learned from the perspective of both those organising events over recent years (up to and including the 2010 Festival), as well as those who have attended events. This investigational piece of work aims to assist the ESRC to better understand how the Festival can support researchers, and to consider how successes evident over time can more readily be captured within the evaluation framework in future. This report considers a number of key areas related to the Festival of Social Science:

- The experiences, perceptions and outcomes of the Festival from the perspective of attendees
- The experiences, perceptions and outcomes of the Festival from the perspective of organisers
- The learning and successes of the Festival from the perspective of ESRC Festival staff.

Recommendations for future Festivals, including training, support and evaluation have also been provided.

The report documents work carried out between April 2011 to May 2012 and includes data collated via:

- a) A review of Festival annual evaluation reports 2006-2010 and access to ESRC data on media coverage of the Festival 2006-2010
- b) A questionnaire survey of 35 attendees (2008-2010)
- c) A questionnaire survey of 48 organisers, and further semi-structured interviews with 14 organisers (2008-2010)
- d) Interviews with three members of ESRC Festival staff.

The report suggests a number of notable successes for the Festival of Social Science. The Festival has reached over 43,000 attendees in five years, many of whom were new to the ESRC and had a low or limited awareness of social science prior to attendance. The audience feedback showed very high levels of satisfaction and intention to attend future Festivals. Attendees followed up events at the Festival with actions, including passing on

information, finding out more about topics covered and using information personally. Attendees appreciated the social function of events and, in addition, the events increased their knowledge generally and their awareness of the ESRC. Overall, Festival events targeted a very diverse range of attendees and are becoming more innovative.

The Festival of Social Science and the ESRC provided essential credibility, motivation, and funding opportunities for organisers to reach audiences outside of the academic arena and to develop innovative events. The motivations involved in developing events were both disciplinary and personal. The Festival brand also enabled researchers to obtain buy-in from colleagues who might not normally support communications and engagement activities. Retrospectively event organisers were able to report on a wide variety of benefits from involvement including development of further research and a range of new (and re-established) partnerships, both internal and external. The focus on the social sciences was seen as a unique opportunity for engagement in this area.

Beyond these noted successes there are also aspects for further development, and the report lists six learning points:

Learning point 1: Maintain success whilst expanding the Festival

The Festival of Social Science is seen as prestigious, credible and well-respected by all types of participants. ESRC staff provide a considerable amount of responsive support to both organisers and applicants to the Festival, which is implicit to the success of many events. Maintaining this, as the Festival expands within the current disciplinary and financial environments, will be important for the future of the Festival. At a minimum the Festival will require continued staffing and financial support at the levels it currently receives. For expansion and capitalisation on some of the aspects referred to below, an expanded staff base would be required.

Learning point 2: Communicate the broader benefits for researchers

Organisers' personal, organisational and disciplinary motivations and impacts were extensive, and there are currently mixed uses of the Festival events. Some organisers saw events in isolation to other work they or their organisations were likely to be involved in; others used the continuity of the Festival to build up the impact of their events over time.

The ESRC should communicate more widely the variety of potential benefits for organisers, to encourage continued engagement with the Festival. There are various options to do this - for instance by disseminating the positive outcomes of the Festival to the broader social science, science communication and public engagement communities, and insuring such outcomes feature in communication to researchers by RCUK, National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) and Catalysts.

Learning point 3: Capture learning and benefits

Evaluation of the Festival of Social Science already provides a useful indication of the benefits of Festival events; however a retrospective opportunity to explore ramifications is helpful to capture longer-term matters. ESRC should seek to reach attendees and organisers at a later date - perhaps through targeting attendees and organisers for follow-up six months to a year after their engagement, as this may increase response rates and further add to evidence on these issues.

Learning point 4: Share learning amongst organisers

There is a growing community of organisers who have built considerable expertise in this area. This should be capitalised on by the ESRC and higher education institutions via capacity-building events, mentoring, activities or materials to share this understanding more broadly and efficiently with other social scientists.

Learning point 5: Build a broader perspective of the Festival

This report is limited in size, scope and response rate. Further qualitative work would be beneficial, exploring the outcomes of the Festival of Social Science on its attendees in more detail, as well as more extensive quantitative data collection. The organiser questionnaire and interviews targeted those that have previously been involved in the Festival of Social Science. Future work should examine the perception of the Festival amongst the wider academic community and non-participants to avoid any potential biases.

It would be useful to build a broader picture of the role of Festivals in academic engagement activities across the disciplines, by linking evaluation to other national Festivals and events. There is also capacity for increased research on communication and engagement amongst the social science disciplines, when contrasted to the extensive research which has already been carried out in science and engineering fields.

Learning point 6: Celebrate the Festival

The ESRC should celebrate and highlight the many benefits and successes of the Festival. The Festival has expanded and developed over the years. Its format allows it to be responsive to contemporary issues facing social scientists, without adding to the costs of organising it. It has evolved as a sustainable and continuing opportunity for social scientists to engage with other or new audiences. Attendees enjoy activities, are encouraged to consider social science issues and are keen to attend similar events again. Organisers are able to lever a variety of outcomes from the relatively small amount of money granted by

the ESRC for events, in addition it provides a supportive environment in which to develop engagement skills.

There is very positive support for the continuation of the Festival of Social Science amongst attendees, organisers and ESRC staff involved in the Festival, which in addition to the broader evidence provided here suggests it is a good investment for the ESRC to maintain. The foundations of learning, understanding and support which it has now provided for engagement with social science issues offer opportunities for further expansion, increased media coverage of events and the ESRC, and the potential for more activities to be funded externally (for instance by higher education institutions) but to be branded as part of the Festival.

I. Introduction

- I.1. The Festival of Social Science assists researchers to communicate with new audiences, including business, charities, government, teenagers, pensioners and parents by showcasing the diversity and relevance of social science research. Many organisers are ESRC-funded, but the Festival is open for anyone to apply. The events are held at a number of locations across the UK and has steadily increased, with approximately 80 events held in 2006 to over 120 in 2010.
- I.2. Each year the Festival is evaluated externally or internally, and these evaluations have catalogued a wealth of information. This includes details in terms of the specific events, the publicity and media coverage they received, and how effectively wider Festival of Social Science objectives are being met. However, the evaluation focus on outcomes shortly after the events themselves means it is often difficult to consider effects and consequences of engagement which may only appear following a longer period of time and reflection.

This report documents the learning and successes of Festival events for event organisers over recent years, as well as for those who have attended events.

- I.3. This investigational piece of work aimed to assist the ESRC to better understand how the Festival can support researchers, and to consider how broader outcomes can more readily be captured within the evaluation framework in future.

2. Aims and approach of the report

Aims

2.1. This report seeks to consider a number of key areas related to the Festival of Social Science:

- The experiences, perceptions and outcomes of the Festival of Social Science from the perspective of attendees
- The experiences, perceptions and outcomes of the Festival of Social Science from the perspective of organisers
- The learning and successes of the Festival from the perspective of ESRC Festival staff.

Recommendations for future Festivals, training, support and evaluation are provided.

2.2. This work did not intend to comment on the quality or otherwise of the events involved or the broader impact of each of the Festivals; it was focused primarily on the experience of the Festival itself amongst selected organisers and attendees.

Approach

2.3. The report comprises primary and secondary data collated via a number of means. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the various aspects of information presented in this report. Four key data collection techniques were used: secondary analysis of existing evaluation reports and data; a questionnaire of event attendees; questionnaires and interviews with event organisers and; interviews with ESRC Festival staff.

A. Existing Festival of Social Science evaluations

2.4. At the outset of the project the evaluation reports from 2006-2010 were reviewed in detail. This process informed and assisted with the design of the questionnaires and interviews. Additionally, the reports were also mined for information related to learning and success. Data on media coverage was also viewed and utilised.

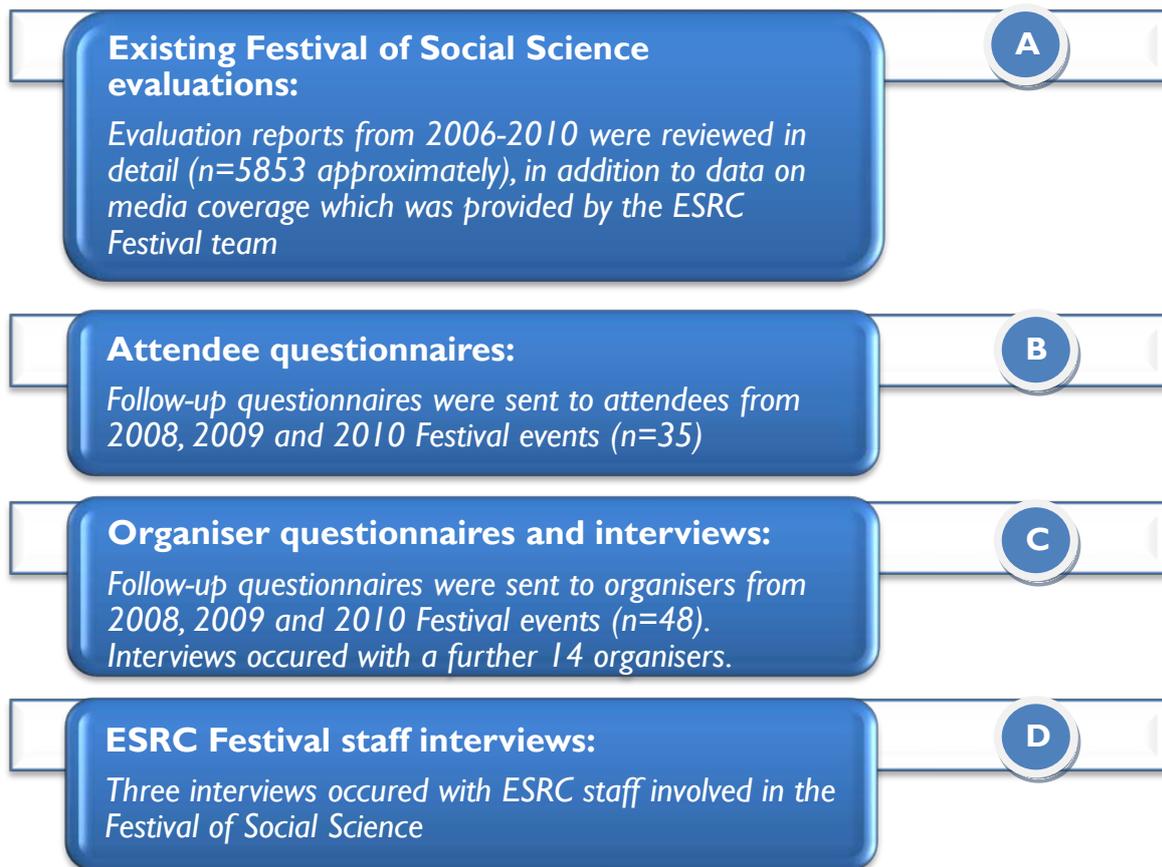


Figure 1: Overview of methods and data utilised

B. Attendee questionnaires

- 2.5. Attendees of prior Festival of Social Science events were consulted regarding their perspective on the event/s they attended. Attendees were asked to retrospectively complete a questionnaire on a number of areas including:
- Awareness of the value of social science (or the discipline/research/topic they attended)
 - New collaborations or partnerships developed
 - Any evidence of continued interest in other areas of social science and the value of this.
- 2.6. The questionnaire was designed to be sufficiently broad to capture the variety of events included within the Festival format and to avoid questions which required a very specific memory recall of the event itself. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in **Appendix One**. SurveyMonkey was used to collate the questionnaire data, which were then analysed using Excel and SPSS.

- 2.7. The attendees' questionnaires were distributed via email address to those who had left their contact details with the ESRC at the 2008, 2009 or 2010 Festival of Social Science. A decision was made not to extend the sampling beyond these years due to incomplete records and issues of memory recall. Emails were sent to 731 individuals. Following two circulations of the email, 35 attendees completed the questionnaire, a response rate of just under five per cent. Although the response rate to the request is relatively low it should be noted that this was somewhat expected given the period of time which had elapsed following the events.
- C. Organiser questionnaires and interviews*
- 2.8. Organisers were consulted regarding their perspective of the events, and asked to retrospectively complete a questionnaire focusing on aspects including:
- Any new partnerships developed, co-funding or funding developed from the event
 - Experience of carrying out public engagement via the Festival; learning and continuation of any methods of engagement developed in the Festival
 - Support and information provided when developing events.
- 2.9. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in **Appendix One**. SurveyMonkey was used to collate the questionnaire data, which were then analysed using Excel and SPSS.
- 2.10. In the case of this questionnaire it was sent to organisers from the 2008, 2009 and 2010 Festivals, a total of 514 individuals. The response rate for this questionnaire was just under 10 per cent, with 48 individuals completing a questionnaire.
- 2.11. Fourteen organisers were also interviewed. Interview questions were kept broad to reflect the differing roles of organisers, nature of events and frequency of involvement in the Festival, and included eleven questions. A copy of the interview questions can be found in **Appendix One**. Interview questions were challenging to design as they needed to reflect the differing roles organisers might take in a Festival of Social Science event. A number of organisers were academics who went on to be centrally involved in the events themselves, whilst others were involved in a more supportive, administrative function. An overview of the organisers' employment, funding and occupation can be found in **Appendix Two**. The interviews were transcribed in full and analysed for key themes.
- 2.12. The sample for the interviews was purposive - this involved identifying key individuals that it would be informative to talk to rather than seeking to randomly sample interviewees. Due to the time limitations involved it was necessary to carry out the interviews in parallel with the questionnaire. As such, a list of 26 organisers who had been involved in different events over 2008, 2009 and 2010 was provided

by the ESRC with the aim of interviewing 15 organisers. Whilst this technique has limitations and there could be biases in the individuals suggested, it was practical given the restrictions of the project.

- 2.13. Initially the 26 organisers were contacted via email to arrange an interview, and four responded and completed an interview in a straightforward manner. The remaining 10 interviewees who completed interviews did so after also being contacted by telephone, being traced to other institutions or organisations, or via referral as someone also involved in an event. This meant considerable time was necessary to locate organisers beyond the initial list provided, and should be noted as a limitation when carrying out retrospective work of this type.

D. ESRC Festival staff interviews

- 2.14. Finally, a series of three interviews with members of ESRC staff were carried out. The questions for these interviews were similar in nature to those which had been asked of organisers. A copy of the interview questions can be found in **Appendix One**. The interviews were transcribed in full and analysed for key themes. Whilst these interviewees were expected to have a clear relationship to the Festival of Social Science, its aims and outcomes were included as a key source of anecdotal information, with the expectation that they would also have views on capturing the learning and successes of the Festival in future evaluations.

3. Findings

Motivations for participation in the Festival of Social Science

- 3.1. When asked retrospectively why they had attended events, attendees gave a variety of reasons. Selecting a maximum of three reasons why they attended the event, the most popular responses were for 'general/personal interest' which 68 per cent (n=23) of attendees selected, closely followed by 62 per cent (n=21) who selected 'for work/research reasons'. Eight attendees mentioned 'networking' as a reason for attendance.
- 3.2. Despite the relatively high number of responses suggesting attendance had been due to personal motivations, many attendees described their attendance as being in a 'professional role' - 56 per cent (n=19) described attending as a professional, compared to 26 per cent (n=9) as a member of the general public, and 18 per cent (n=6) as a school, university or college student. This is broadly reflective of the typical attendees at the Festival, though school, university and college students were slightly underrepresented in comparison to numbers attending the Festival.¹ Additional information on the demographic profile of attendees can be found in **Appendix Two**.
- 3.3. Beyond the personal and professional motivations, there is also evidence of increasing numbers of attendees who are new to the area; over the last three years new audiences for social science have increased. In 2008, 34 per cent (n=286) of respondents described themselves as having had low or no knowledge of social science, compared to 66 per cent (n=881) of respondents in 2010 (see **Appendix Three**).
- 3.4. Organisers gave a variety of reasons for their involvement in the Festival - for enjoyment, fun, to take research outside of the 'ivory tower', to communicate about opportunities that were open to researchers that other stakeholders may not have access to, and that the Festival itself provided a relatively easy opportunity to reach different groups. From prior evaluation reports it is clear that the Festival is uniquely placed to reach diverse attendees: nearly 40 per cent of its events regularly target a general audience, with a quarter to a third of events (25-30 per cent) focusing on those with some knowledge, and over 10 per cent aimed at professionals (see **Appendix Three**).
- 3.5. In some cases the nature of the research organisers were involved in was described as being particularly pertinent to wider interest and engagement, or offered an

¹ In 2008, for example, 40 per cent attended in a professional capacity, 29 per cent as a member of the general public and 31 per cent as a school/college student (Technopolis, 2008).

opportunity for a degree of involvement, for example via data collection methods amongst non-academic stakeholders:

'One of the things that we had found quite difficult in our research was to get firms to tell us what they were doing in terms of ensuring that they complied with...[the] law. There was a twofold approach to this [event] - partly this would inform our research, or give us at least some information, and I would have thought that actually would always motivate why we would do it. On the other side was that we thought, here was an opportunity to, if you like, spread the word.' Organiser interviewee 7

'A lot of what people like the ESRC do is quite hard to discuss, why that's of value, and so having events like the Festival of Social Science is an immediate way of grabbing the profile and showing that social science does have relevance in everyday life... in social research, that is a complete continuum, or maybe not even a continuum. Academics are part of the real world, and people who don't do engagement - you see it suffering in their research'
Organiser interviewee 1

3.6. The relatively small amount of funding allowed a space to try new things: it provides an opportunity 'for innovative events, which may not have been envisaged in the original proposal' (Organiser questionnaire). From the prior evaluation reports it is clear that new approaches are being encouraged. Events associated with the Festival are becoming more diverse and innovative. Seminars and workshops, which formed 44 per cent of the programme in 2006, have decreased, leaving opportunities for more engagement via activities such as discussion and debate (39 per cent of the programme in 2010) and hands-on activities and exhibitions (21 per cent of the programme in 2010) (see **Appendix Three**). Events provided an opportunity to disseminate, share and collect information, and opening their research to wider comment was clearly an invigorating and encouraging process for many organisers.

3.7. Participation in the Festival could also be positive from an institutional or organisational perspective. The Festival and its support by the ESRC lent credibility to the events and encouraged support both from academics involved and their university more widely. Outwardly facing work was seen to be increasingly important to universities in the context of 'impact' and funding associated to this:

'It was very helpful for me for promoting the research and the value of the research internally. So I have gained personally from the University appreciating what we were doing in the research.' Organiser interviewee 12

'While funding of each event is relatively small it carries great kudos, as this created a momentum and gather supplementary funding from other sources/partners.'
Organiser questionnaire

'The grants sounded more prestigious than they were in monetary terms... So, what I had was an amount of income from the ESRC attached to my name – I have some event that I'm running, I have a press release and managed to get media interest in both events - both times managed to develop contacts with local policymakers of the issues. So it was a very good platform upon which to be seen to be doing things and to be actually making some real connections.' Organiser interviewee 6

- 3.8. There were also a number of comments which suggested organisers were motivated by a wider responsibility, as a member of the social science community:

'It [the Festival] is something that we know the ESRC would like to happen because it's in our collective interest that social science research is noted, recognised, written about in the media...I entirely see our responsibility there, in terms of helping the ESRC achieving that.' Organiser interviewee 7

The ethos of the Festival of Social Science was then interchangeable with the responsibilities they felt as a social scientist, but provided the push, funding or inspiration to go out and do something:

'I'm a strong believer in all our research, we need to reach out to the different groups, work strongly with communities, always return to communities after completing research, trying to continue the engagement after we've completed the projects and studies themselves. So I see that as inherent within good quality social science research.' Organiser interview 12

- 3.9. In summary, attendees were motivated to attend for reasons of interest, professional motivations and as an opportunity to meet people, whilst organisers were similarly motivated by personal, organisational and professional goals, as well as their role in the wider social science community.

Developing engagement skills

- 3.10. Beyond the organiser motivations highlighted above, a further key trend emerging in the data was the opportunity to develop engagement techniques and to learn more about this area of work amongst organisers. This included examples such as learning 'the mechanics' of running events, how to create connections with schools, how to reach particular audiences and groups, but also encouraging confidence in carrying out activities of this type:

'It certainly gives confidence in going forward with other events. In fact, post Festival of Social Science we have run about three, maybe four conferences and workshops since.' Organiser interviewee 4

'I hadn't really run an event like that before and with it being quite external, I wanted to get people outside of government along – that can be more nerve-wracking than something that's internal. But I think it is just useful experience, doing things like finding a venue, commissioning the writers and the speakers – so it was positive in that sense.' Organiser interviewee 5

'It's really good for an early career researcher because it may not be a lot of money, but £2000...from a Research Council, when you're starting your career, is actually quite important. So I think that in developing confidence, and just validating that way of thinking, I think is worthwhile.' ESRC staff interviewee 3

The benefits for early career researchers were frequently highlighted, not only in developing awareness of public engagement techniques and achieving a small amount of Research Council funding, but also in developing a reputation and making contact with other academics in the field.

- 3.11. The ESRC staff that we spoke to shared this enthusiasm for working with organisers; an environment is maintained in which ESRC staff provide a bespoke and positive level of support to individual organisers that may not be possible in larger Festivals or funding schemes for such activities:

'I would interact with the event holders themselves. We would gauge the kind of support they need from some of the forms...we'd follow that up with e-mail and things like that...Then we would also liaise with occasionally their press officers at the universities to encourage, in some circumstances, to get them to do some press work.' ESRC staff interviewee 1

Whilst ESRC staff discussed organisers becoming increasingly skilled and adept over the years of the Festival, resulting in some changes in terms of how the ESRC staff work with them, they continue to provide a useful support system:

'As they've [organisers] learnt and progressed, we've needed to give them different types of help. Before, it was quite directed - we'd tell them what we were going to do and we would get on with it and be very selective in the kind of support that we give them. Whereas now, we try and help them do their own work and fit in with what they need.' ESRC staff interviewee 1

In addition to the support ESRC staff offered event organisers, feedback is also provided to unsuccessful applicants, which can encourage them to apply in future years and to continue to have a positive view of trying out such events.

- 3.12. Though a number of organisers found their involvement increased their wider engagement experience, there were also organisers who regularly undertook events

in their day-to-day work. These interviewees, whilst frequently being gracious regarding the Festival and its staff, often commented on elements of Festival support that were less helpful to them. This included issues such as frustration at having to justify target audiences, participate in administration, and potentially ineffective use of intermediaries for marketing or communication:

'In general, Research Councils are keen to have events like this...and will offer a lot of in-kind support and say "we'll do all the organising". But in practice, in my experience, and this is in general, not necessarily to do with the Festival of Social Science, but in practice you find yourself doing a lot of the leg work...Sometimes I can feel it is disproportionate, that things are taking too much time and your calendar's already packed – you've got a lot of other competing priorities.' Organiser interviewee 8

Whilst then support was not necessary for all organisers, much of this personal contact and bespoke assistance can become problematic as the Festival expands. This may mean 'co-production' models, for example where organisers use their own university support mechanisms like Press Offices whilst adhering to ESRC aims and expectations, will become necessary. Attendance at Festival events has increased from 3,800 to 18,000 (over 470 per cent) over the past five years (see **Appendix Three**), whilst the Festival since 2008 has had a decrease of 27 per cent in its budget. The Festival has had to become more efficient and streamlined. Continuing expansion of the Festival may draw concerns as to how the level of support currently offered (particularly for Festival novices) can be maintained.

Links between the Festival of Social Science and research

- 3.13. Beyond the opportunity for organisers to learn more about public engagement, the Festival also provides opportunities for attendees to hear about contemporary areas of research and to have their own interest in social science reignited. The Festival of Social Science has an increasing and notable influence on its attendees.

In 2009/2010 there was a considerable increase in the percentage of attendees anticipating use of the event, resources, ideas, materials or contacts after their participation, with at least 7 out of 10 attendees identifying a minimum of one use (see **Appendix Three**).

Statements on the outcome of the event/s	% (n) agreement
It raised my awareness of the social sciences in general	79% (n=26)
It raised my awareness of the ESRC and its work	91% (n=30)
It raised my awareness of the benefits social science brings to society	88% (n=29)
It increased my knowledge of the specific topic/s covered at the event/s	97% (n=31)
It made me more interested in social science	75% (n=24)
I learnt something new at the event/s	97% (n=31)

Table 1: Attendee outcomes

In the follow-up questionnaire there were high levels of agreement that attendees had increased knowledge, learnt something new and useful, and that the event had raised awareness of the ESRC and its work as illustrated in Table 1, above.

Eight attendees added additional detail regarding personal outcomes of attendance. Some suggested it had increased their incremental understanding or enjoyment of a subject area and professional benefits were also mentioned, such as writing articles and specifically applying for a job and deciding to volunteer. Additionally, for some it provided a positive focus and rejuvenation:

'It re-awakened my interest for social science and made me realise its relevance to the work we do in... special educational needs, in terms of trying to bring objectivity to what is often quite an emotional encounter between parents, education authorities and schools'. Attendee questionnaire

'Finding out more information on the topic covered' was an outcome for many attendees (n=23), as was 'using information in personal activities' (n=19).

- 3.14. From the organiser perspective mixed views were expressed as to how effectively Festival events communicated about or contributed to the research process. However, a number of organisers suggested that involvement could lead to new questions, ideas and enthusiasm about research areas, and suggested events could incorporate piloting of research techniques or ideas, which influence later research:

'[We did] a Festival of Science event about seven or eight years ago which involved a questionnaire with people, and that actually led us to do a proper questionnaire about attitudes and has led to research.' Organiser interviewee 7

'I got a lot out of engaging with young people through this managed environment at the Festival, that I think I would have struggled to find a way to do as positively as we did

through the Festival itself. I have to say we have had the event again, since the Festival, so not only was it a pilot, it was such a successful pilot that the [named location] have asked us to come back each year.’ Organiser interviewee 12

‘We were firstly interested in the public's views of something we have been working on...but also we were interested specifically in applying a participatory technique to see how effective that was in obtaining information and getting people to interact with it.’ Organiser interviewee 9

- 3.15. These comments suggested a reciprocal relationship between Festival of Social Science events and the research process. Other organisers however suggested their involvement in the Festival of Social Science was perceived in quite a segregated way to their activities and as such they were keen not to lose sight of the wider motivations by focusing on their own outcomes:

‘We organised this mainly for the benefit of the young people. I think the ESRC Festival of Social Science’s spirit is altruistic. We haven’t published anything, we haven’t personally or professionally benefited from it. Only in that we enjoyed it so much ourselves.’ Organiser interviewee 10

‘It is hard to get people to talk about [research area]. So that is why we came up with this quite ingenious way of presenting [research area] to the general public and to get them talking to us in a relaxed and informal environment. Because it is a recognised Festival – we thought the participants in the audience would recognise they can speak freely and they're not being researched or judged – it is just the informal comments we were looking to capture on the day.’ Organiser interviewee 4

- 3.16. From the questionnaire data it was clear very few organisers ‘used the event/s as a basis for working with others at the event/s (e.g., academics, stakeholders) on research funding applications’ (n=12) or ‘fed over to teaching’ (n=13), though it should be noted that not all organisers worked in academic roles. While those organising events are not doing so purely to gain funding or reproduce teaching materials, they are creating bespoke, targeted and appropriate activities for wider stakeholders. It is clear that the lack of connection or potential segregation of the Festival of Social Science from academic responsibilities in teaching and research could deter some academics from becoming involved.

- 3.17. Whilst some organisers were keen to continue to create ‘one-off’ activities primarily for the benefits of the participants and thus separate from some of their research or teaching portfolios, other organisers had sought a level of sustainability from the event. Examples included resources from activities remaining online, further funding being sought to continue or develop an original Festival event, and new connections being established.

Contacts and networks

- 3.18. The opportunity to develop contacts was noted from both the attendee and organiser perspective. Attendees used information to support existing relationships - the most popular action following an event was to 'pass on information to colleagues, friends or others', which 79 per cent (n=26) of attendees said they had done. A number of attendees found the events had made them interested to 'hear and talk to social scientists again' (88 per cent, n=29) and agreed that they had 'met interesting people' (78 per cent, n=25), pointing to a more social function of the Festival of Social Science events.

Amongst the many actions that occurred following engagement with the Festival of Social Science, 12 attendees 'made further contact with people met at the event', as illustrated in Figure 2. It is also worth highlighting that only three attendees recorded carrying out no actions following an event, and two further attendees recorded carrying out one or two. Nineteen attendees carried out three to four actions after the event, with a further 11 attendees recording five to seven of the activities listed.

These outcomes broadly mirror the findings in the prior evaluation reports. Between 2006-2010 on average 85 per cent (n=4693) of attendees planned to pass on information following events, compared to 79 per cent (n=26) of those that stated that they did in the most recent attendee questionnaire. Though only 12 attendees reported making further contact with people, a further eight attendees were not sure. At 57 per cent (n=20), this is also only slightly under the numbers of attendees with such intentions recorded in the evaluation data, where on average 59 per cent (n=3256) of attendees referred to this intention. These differences between intention and recorded actions are then relatively small, though it was not possible to directly map between individuals participating in previous evaluations and the more recent attendee data.

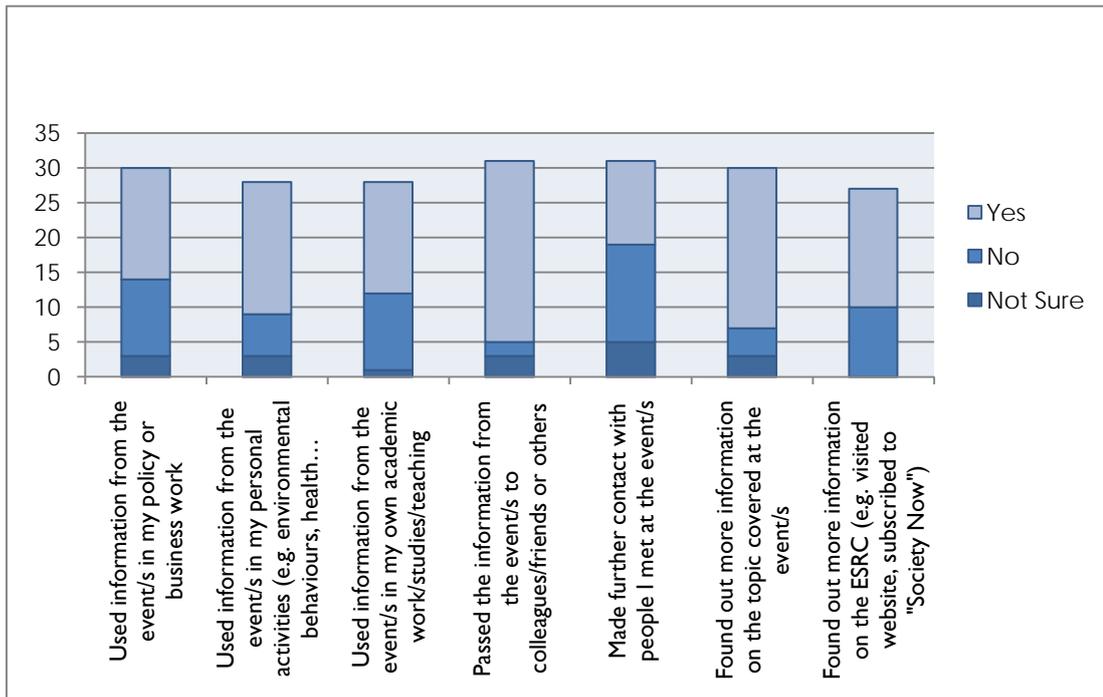


Figure 2: What did you do after the event, by attendee

3.19. When asked about benefits of the Festival, the potential to engage broad stakeholders including non-academics (n=12) was often a popular reason:

'To find ways to make your research accessible and relevant to people outside of academia and really explore the relationship between your research and practice.' Organiser questionnaire

Organisers reported having 'further contact with public, private and third sector organisations involved in the event/s' (n=34), 'further contact with attendees I met at the event/s' (n=31), and 'passed the information from the event/s to colleagues/friends or others' (n=31), suggesting events are often useful for making connections and gathering information as illustrated in Table 2 (data provided from the organiser questionnaire).

Which of the following occurred after the event/s?	Yes	No	Not sure	Not applicable
Further contact with attendees I met at the event/s	31	11	1	2
Further contact with public, private and third sector organisations involved in the event/s	34	4	2	4
Received contact from academics who had seen or heard about the event/s	22	11	6	3
Used the event/s as a basis for working with others at the event/s (eg, academics, stakeholders) on further public engagement activities	26	11	3	2
Used the event/s as a basis for working with others at the event/s (eg, academics, stakeholders) on research funding applications	12	21	2	4

Table 2: Organiser outcomes

A variety of organisers reported that involvement in the Festival had led to people contacting them about their research or personal attributes as a researcher, including voluntary, policy-making or educational groups, and in the case of one organiser, interviewee 1, they felt this had been very specifically influential in their next research post:

‘Because I put around university I was doing this event, people did get in touch with me, including one person who asked me to speak to her students. And then I ended up getting a job in that department... and I think had I not started to build up a reputation in the university for being the sort of person who likes to do community engagement then I probably wouldn't have got the job.’ Organiser interviewee 1

‘One of the people there was a sixth form teacher in [subject area] who wanted one of us to come and essentially do something similar with his students, which I was the one who did. That was kind of nice to do. It was useful - I hadn't realised that A-level [subject] had so much [researchers area] in it. But there we go. That's all good news.’ Organiser interviewee 7

‘It's connected us up with a lot more people and although I run this for one week in March, I am often discussing it and often discussing ideas with people all over the place, from the scientific community about what can we do together, can we do this, has that been done before, all these kind of things.’ Organiser interviewee 2

'We were asked to contribute to local policy-making on sustainability...with the [city council]... we then engaged with a variety of third sector organisations, who through their engagement with the Festival appreciated what we were trying to do through the research, and we've been working with them... And at the same time they have been working in partnership with us trying to find other funding to keep the research going. And we have developed a vehicle...with educational professionals both in terms of moving it into school agendas...we've been working with [city] Education Department for that and...working with IT companies to try and move it into the commercial realm, for a product that might be available in a commercial sense in a few years time.' Organiser interviewee 12

- 3.20. For others, events had not provided new connections but a focus to increase and develop existing relationships and acquaintances, as these organisers describe:

'We didn't actually develop any new relationships but it strengthened the relationships we had - for instance with [names council], it did strengthen that relationship...One particular research community who did attend...said it was good for them to see that we are not just researchers who ask questions, that we are able to put out output in quite a unique way. So they came along and again they give good feedback.' Organiser interviewee 4

'So we worked with them [names organisation] for the 2009 Festival to rework our website and to set up a reciprocal link between it and [their website]... we then entered into a collaboration with [them] and put on an exhibition there... I've now got a collaboration with a larger-scale voluntary organisation... we've got follow-on funding from the ESRC for another project working with them to turn research findings into accessible online resources for people.' Organiser interviewee 11

- 3.21. For some organisers working in challenging areas, even inviting participants to the same environment and having an activity work was seen to be a positive outcome, as organiser five who works in a challenging and sometimes controversial area of policy-making describes:

'We were a bit worried about how it would go, getting first... different people around the table who are quite often adversarial... we wanted a space where people were challenged to think in different ways and leave some of their baggage at the door and have an open chat about it. So for us, it was a huge success as an event and policy people too – I think it was really important in terms of relationships development, so different stakeholders in this area of emerging policy.' Organiser interviewee 5

- 3.22. There are difficulties in mapping connections from such events; relationships are transient, complimentary and complex, but many interviewees were convinced that the Festival of Social Science event had played a contribution, whilst some attendees also recorded personal communications after the event - increased reputational

aspects; awareness of research and links to relevant communities, groups and individuals - as a useful outcome.

Role of the media in the Festival of Social Science

- 3.23. One area for potential connections is the media. Although 17 organisers had noted that their event/s generated media coverage, 18 had not and a further six were not sure. This mirrors findings from prior Festival of Social Science evaluation reports which suggest media coverage can be problematic to generate and patchy in its recording.

Data made available by the ESRC demonstrates an increasing media presence around the Festival activities, as illustrated in Figure 3. Although there was a dip in media coverage in 2008, media coverage has almost doubled in recent years, with 135 recorded examples in 2010 compared to 69 instances of media coverage in 2006.²

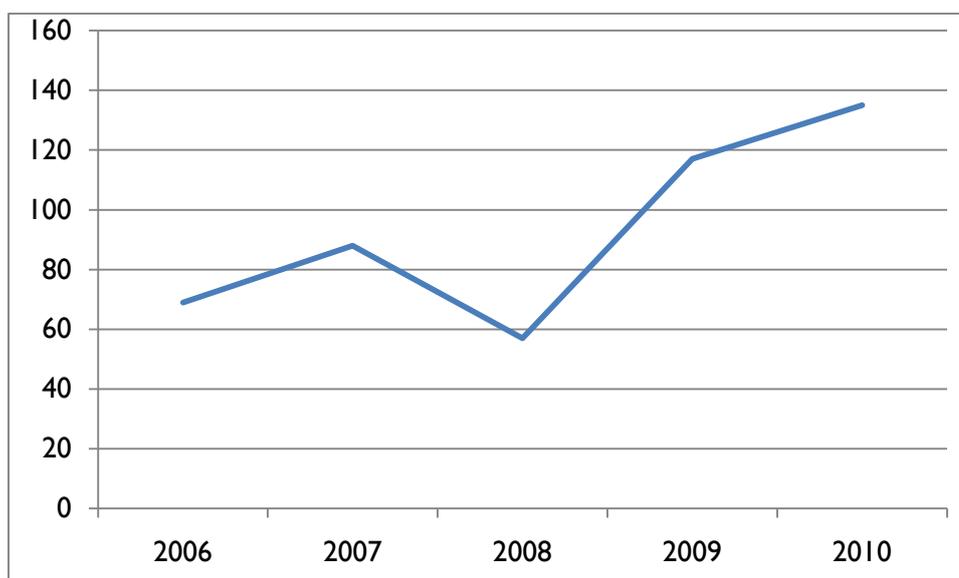


Figure 3: Media coverage of the Festival of Social Science 2006-2010.

- 3.24. ESRC staff were able to expand on some of the explanations around these peaks and troughs in coverage. For instance, certain events were particularly topical (e.g. an event on devolution) and attracted more attention as they were newsworthy. Running the Festival in parallel to National Science and Engineering week had at times attracted more attention to activities, but equally overshadowed on other occasions - in particular as National Science and Engineering Week also created its own media campaign, thus creating competition between the two 'brands'.

² Although beyond the scope of the time period considered in this report, it should be highlighted that in 2011 the Festival of Social Science received its highest ever amount of media coverage, with 620 instances recorded.

- 3.25. There has also been some diversity in styles of media coverage the Festival events generated. There is growing coverage of the Festival via internet-based sources, and it is frequently of interest to magazines and regional newspapers, though TV and radio features remain less prevalent as displayed in Figure 4 below.
- 3.26. Whilst an area that continues to be relatively problematic, it is also clear that ESRC staff have increased experience in this issue and that Festival events provide a real opportunity for media coverage. From the perspective of ESRC staff, increasing profiles with the media could be challenging in that many of the events are national and not held in London where many journalists are located, however they also provide significant opportunities:

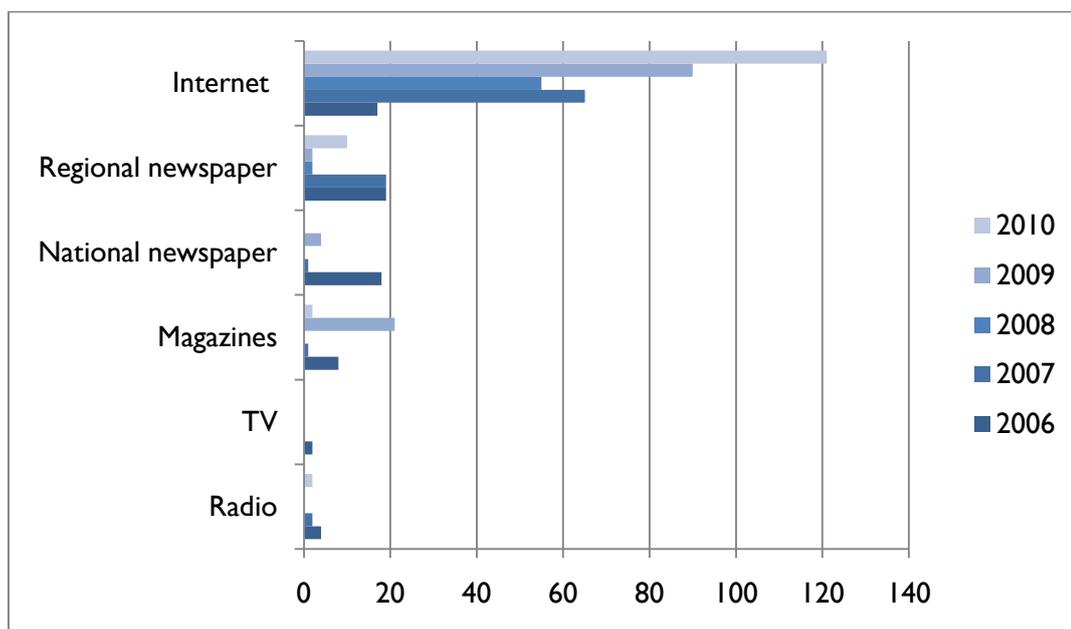


Figure 4: Types of media coverage 2006-2010

'It does showcase the value of social science and the breadth of social science...the ESRC can appear to be a faceless organisation; it's an opportunity for the ESRC to appear less faceless...it gives us a news story, so that we can go out and talk about this research, because often there is no event that happens to make it newsworthy... it highlights to policymakers and businesses that there's research out there that they can use.' ESRC staff interviewee 1

ESRC staff highlighted that they have in recent years become more aware of how to support event organisers in attracting media attention (e.g. generating individual press releases) as well as conscious of the implications of pursuing certain types of coverage - for instance, promoting national activities can overshadow the opportunity for local and regional coverage. They were also aware of inconsistencies in the recording of media coverage, for instance they now include a broader range of media sources in their cutting services, including examples of social media more

readily from 2011 onwards, and encouraging individual event organisers to more effectively capture any media coverage they receive.

Role of the Festival of Social Science in engagement

3.27. Beyond the various outcomes in terms of information, contacts and awareness amongst attendees already noted, attendance could also encourage them to attend similar activities in the future. From the prior evaluation reports alone it is clear that there are high levels of attendee satisfaction, and over the last three years over 95 per cent of attendees have said that they would attend the Festival again (see **Appendix Three**). Ninety-seven per cent (n=31)³ of those completing the follow-up questionnaire said that they had enjoyed the events, and 63 per cent (n=32) of attendees stated that attending the event had encouraged them to attend a further event associated to the Festival in future years. Amongst attendees there was very positive support for the continuation of the Festival, with 97 per cent (n=32) indicating that it should continue.

3.28. From the perspective of organisers, the wider support of the Festival of Social Science was very significant for the events to take place. Sixty-nine per cent (n=33) of organisers that completed the questionnaire said that they would have been unlikely to carry out the event had the Festival not existed:

'Creating a critical mass of events. Opportunity to make a real and visible impact of ESRC-funded research.' Organiser questionnaire

'The Festival provided an impetus and an overall focus; we might have organised them as part of our programme, but the Festival helped give a context for people.' Organiser questionnaire

'It celebrates social sciences, which is a good thing at this moment in time, and it draws out connections for non-social scientists on the impact the field makes on everyday life.' Organiser questionnaire

3.29. When organisers were asked what was unique about the Festival of Social Science a wide variety of responses were given. Broadly categorising these, most popular was the perception that the Festival of Social Science reaches broad, diverse and non-academic groups (n=12):

'The Festival offers a flurry of activity during the course of the Festival. It is great to be exposed to so much interesting research in an accessible and engaging way. This is a unique

³ Small variations in response rates per question result in fluctuating percentages amongst statements.

Festival which really encourages researchers in the social sciences to share their work with non-specialists - we need more of this.' Organiser questionnaire

'It provides a welcome forum and focus on wider social science; important not to get dwarfed by the national science week stuff' Organiser questionnaire

In the main it was highlighted that this was a relatively unique opportunity for social science engagement, and the questionnaire data in particular highlighted the distinction from National Science and Engineering Week as being a positive step, but there were also mixed reactions to this:

'A lot of the research that I am involved in is interdisciplinary across natural and social sciences, so I'm not sure whether there would be more benefit in terms of making greater links between, say, the Festival of Social Science and some of the Royal Society and NERC initiatives, which would break down the barriers.' Organiser interviewee 9

'I think it is a pity to see social science being promoted separately from science because I think it feeds into that notion that it's not proper science. And I would like to see it much more as a part of a general science week. Because I think it does tend to be in a bit of a ghetto.' Organiser interviewee 14

- 3.30. A further novel factor highlighted was the Festival's targeting of a wide geographical series of events along with different stakeholders and audiences, and interviewee 2, from the ESRC, stressed the importance of this:

'One of the really good things about the Festival is the geographical spread of events. I think in the future we have to make sure there are events spread across the country so that everybody can have access...I think we have to ensure in the near future that that is maintained, so we have a decent number of events for the public sector, and a decent amount of events for the private sector and certainly a wider range of events for the public.' ESRC staff interviewee 2

Whilst the national focus had clear benefits for organisers, able to arrange events in their locality with relevant partners and stakeholders, it also drew out some critique. A couple of interviewees commented that it was difficult to have an inclusive Festival when events are geographically distant, whilst a further organiser commented that the ESRC 'brand' could be stronger and that many people were not clear about the funder's remit: *'I think in this day and age, they [the ESRC] should have a much stronger brand and presence within the mainstream media and elsewhere'* that the Festival could assist to support.

- 3.31. Regardless of these points there was widespread support for the continuation of the Festival of Social Science, with 40 organisers stating that they thought it was important that the Festival continue - in particular due to the insight and advice the

Festival team provided, and also that the Festival provided a focus point for events of this type and was now an established activity.

The future of the Festival of Social Science

- 3.32. Organisers whom had been involved in more than one Festival were asked if they felt it had improved over the years, and dissemination, publicity, support, advice and assistance were all singled out as aspects that had developed over the years of the Festival. However, there were still recommendations as to elements which could be further developed.

The most frequent suggestion was that publicity and press coverage (both local and national) could be increased (n=5). A few organisers also suggested there could be larger, collaborative activities at specific institutions or in particular geographical locations, and that Festivals could take on particular themes. Finally, there were a number of comments suggesting that particular aspects of the Festivals' outcomes for both organisers and attendees may currently be neglected, as summarised by the comments below:

'Increased networking amongst contributors might be productive. Lessons could be learnt from other, more well-established Festivals; e.g., Hay Festival of Literature.' Organiser questionnaire

'I feel that that very little has been in place to sustain and channel the audience's interest after a successful event. Maybe useful to consider follow-up events to keep the momentum going.' Organiser questionnaire

'The hardest bit is knowing how to reach audiences. Perhaps people who are running a particular event for the first time could be matched with someone who has experience in this i.e. from a previous event?' Organiser questionnaire

Growing confidence in organising events was mirrored in the prior evaluation reports. In four out of the last five years, organisers responding to the Festival evaluations have recorded 100 per cent levels of satisfaction with the events they are organising, suggesting increased assurance and abilities in organising such events (see **Appendix Three**). The emerging message that the outcomes of events could be capitalised on via sharing and continuing contact was also acknowledged and recognised via ESRC staff member comments:

'People have started really thinking about events they are attending and events they are holding, and sharing that knowledge... further down the line they've either become more innovative or they're passing their knowledge on to the academics themselves for sharing that out.' ESRC staff interviewee 3

- 3.33. However, just as there were mixed feelings expressed as to the distinction of the Festival from other science engagement activities, so too were there mixed views as to whether the distinction of the Festival from wider public engagement activities was a positive thing:

'If academics feel "I've done my Festival of Social Science bit, that's all I have to do, I don't need to build this into my grant, I'll just say I'll do something at the Festival"... I wonder whether it might be counter-productive, it might mean that people don't naturally build these types of events into grants.' Organiser interviewee 6

'Increasingly research projects and programmes, certainly with the Research Councils, are requiring you to put together a package of work around pathways to impact...So, the extent to which a specific Festival of Social Science is needed I'm not so sure, but at least it does serve as a focus for people to make an extra effort because people may be doing research that does not necessarily require that element of outreach.' Organiser interviewee 9

From the ESRC Festival staff perspective, the hope was that involvement in the Festival might bring continued involvement in the Festival, as well as influencing how well an organiser might embed such approaches in research funding:

'I think they [organisers] learn a lot from it and then they can go put that into practice...now with impact on public engagement being very important at the start of a research grant... [organisers are] more confident to write those kind of ideas down at the start of the project.' ESRC staff interviewee 1

'People who used to ask us for funding are now building this into their annual cycle...So organisations are starting to build it into the psyche and their way of working and they plan for it...I think that that's testament to the Festival itself and the flexibility and freedom that it allows people to do.' ESRC staff interviewee 3

In addition to the enjoyment and fulfilment which ESRC staff clearly took from working on the Festival, they were also securing their corporate responsibility to assist researchers funded by the Research Councils to communicate, disseminate and engage around their research. ESRC staff reported receiving a variety of anecdotal evidence and examples of relationships developing and outcomes generated from events over months or years, as well as the challenges in attempting to capture this. Whilst they were very confident in the results of their short-term evaluation they actively sought ways to consider long-term 'benefits' and 'changes' which might assist researchers in the future to demonstrate impact.

4. Learning, successes and recommendations

- 4.1. The following section details the key successes of the Festival of Social Science captured 2006-2010, in addition to suggesting a number of learning points for consideration for future Festivals.

The Festival of Social Science from the perspective of attendees

- 4.2. The Festival of Social Science has reached over 43,000 attendees in five years. Over a three-year period, 48 per cent have been new to the ESRC, and in 2010 66 per cent had a low or limited awareness of social science prior to attendance. There are very high levels of satisfaction, intention to attend again and expected actions following attendance. Festival events target a very diverse range of attendees and are becoming more innovative.
- 4.3. Attendees follow up events at the Festival of Social Science with actions, including passing on information, finding out more about topics covered and using information personally. Attendees appreciate the social function of events and in addition the events increase their knowledge generally and their awareness of the ESRC.

The Festival of Social Science from the perspective of organisers

- 4.4. From the organisers' perspective the Festival of Social Science and the ESRC provide essential credibility, motivation, and funding opportunities. The encouragement to reach audiences outside of the academic arena, to develop innovative events and the focus on the social sciences is seen as unique. The motivations involved in developing events are both disciplinary and personal. The Festival brand has also enabled researchers to obtain buy-in from colleagues who might not normally support communications and engagement activities.
- 4.5. Organisers are highly satisfied with the events they are organising, and their events are becoming more innovative. They are able to report on a wide variety of benefits from involvement in the Festival of Social Science, including development of further research and a wide variety of new (and re-established) partnerships, both internal and external.

Learning point 1: Maintain success whilst expanding the Festival

- 4.6. The Festival of Social Science is seen as prestigious, credible, and well-respected by all types of participants. ESRC staff provide a considerable amount of responsive support to both organisers and applicants to the Festival, which is implicit to the success of many events. Maintaining this, as the Festival expands within the current disciplinary and financial environments, will be important for the future of the

Festival. At a minimum the Festival will require continued staffing and financial support at the levels it currently receives. For expansion and capitalisation on some of the aspects referred to below, an expanded staff base would be required.

Learning point 2: Communicate the broader benefits for researchers

- 4.7. Organisers' personal, organisational and disciplinary motivations and impacts were extensive and there are currently mixed uses of the Festival events; some organisers see events in isolation to other work they or their organisations are likely to be involved in; others use the continuity of the Festival to build up the impact of their events over time.

The ESRC should communicate more widely the variety of potential benefits for organisers to encourage continued engagement with the Festival. There are a range of options to do this, for instance via dissemination of the positive outcomes of the Festival to the broader social science, science communication and public engagement communities, and insuring such outcomes feature in communication to researchers by RCUK, the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) and Catalysts.

Learning point 3: Capture learning and benefits

- 4.1. Evaluation of the Festival of Social Science already provides a useful indication of the benefits of Festival events; however a retrospective opportunity to explore ramifications is helpful to capture longer-term matters. ESRC should seek to reach attendees and organisers at a later date - perhaps through targeting attendees and organisers for follow-up six months to a year after their engagement - as this may increase response rates and further add to evidence captured on these issues.

Learning point 4: Share learning amongst organisers

- 4.2. There is a growing community of organisers who have built considerable expertise in this area. This should be capitalised on by the ESRC and higher education institutions via capacity-building events, mentoring, activities or materials to share this understanding more broadly and efficiently with other social scientists.

Learning point 5: Build a broader perspective of the Festival

- 4.3. This report is limited in size, scope and response rate. Further qualitative work would be beneficial, exploring the outcomes of the Festival of Social Science on its attendees in more detail, as well as more extensive quantitative data collection. The organiser questionnaire and interviews targeted those that have previously been

involved in the Festival of Social Science. Future work should examine the perception of the Festival of Social Science amongst the wider academic community and non-participants to avoid any potential biases.

It would be useful to build a broader picture of the role of Festivals in academic engagement activities across the disciplines, by linking evaluation to other national Festivals and events. There is also capacity for increased research on communication and engagement amongst the social science disciplines, when contrasted to the extensive research which has already been carried out in science and engineering fields.

Learning point 6: Celebrate the Festival

- 4.4. The ESRC should celebrate and highlight the many benefits and successes of the Festival. The Festival has expanded and developed over the years. Its format allows it to be responsive to contemporary issues facing social scientists, without adding to the costs of organising it. It has evolved as a sustainable opportunity for social scientists to engage with other or new audiences. Attendees enjoy activities, are encouraged to consider social science issues and are keen to attend similar events again. Organisers are able to lever a variety of outcomes from the relatively small amount of money granted by the ESRC for events, in addition it provides a supportive environment in which to develop engagement skills.

There is very positive support for the continuation of the Festival of Social Science amongst attendees, organisers and ESRC staff involved in the Festival, which in addition to the broader evidence provided here suggests it is a good investment for the ESRC to maintain. The foundations of learning, understanding and support which it has now provided for engagement with social science issues offer opportunities for further expansion, increased media coverage of events and the ESRC, and the potential for more activities to be funded externally (for instance by higher education institutions) but to be branded as part of the Festival.

Appendix One

Attendee questionnaire

Please note: As the questionnaire was distributed via SurveyMonkey the below content does not replicate the precise format.

Attending the Festival of Social Science

In which of the following years did you attend a Festival of Social Science Events?[Multiple answers allowed]

Prior to 2008
2008
2009
2010

Did the event/s you attended encourage you to attend a further event associated to the Festival of Social Science

In the following year <Yes/No>
In future years <Yes/No/Not Sure>

If you remember the name of the event/s or its main topic/s please write these here:

Do you remember why you attended the event/s? (Please select a maximum of two)

General/personal interest
For work/research reasons
Networking opportunity
Sent by school/college/employer
Can't remember
Other (please state)

Would you describe your attendance at the Festival of Social Science event/s as a:

Member of the general public
Professional
School, college or university student
Other (please state)

Impact of the event on you

Which of the following did you do after the event? <Yes/No/Not Sure>

Used information from the event/s in my policy or business work
Used information from the event/s in my personal activities (eg, environmental behaviours, health decisions etc.)
Used information from the event/s in my own academic work/studies/teaching
Passed the information from the event/s to colleagues/friends or others
Made further contact with people I met at the event/s
Found out more information on the topic covered at the event/s
Found out more information on the ESRC (eg, visited website, subscribed to *Society Now*)
Other (please state)

Did you do anything specific after the event/s which had a personal impact on you? (eg, decided to study a social science subject, formed a working relationship with someone you met at the event, contacted an organisation)
<Yes/No/ If Yes please state>

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the impact of the event/s? <Agree/Disagree/Not Sure>

It raised my awareness of the social sciences in general
It raised my awareness of the ESRC and its work
It raised my awareness of the benefits social science brings to society
It increased my knowledge of the specific topic/s covered at the event/s
It made me more interested in social science
It made me interested to hear and talk to social scientists again
I found the event/s useful
I learnt something new at the event/s
I met interesting people
I enjoyed the event/s
Other (please state)

Following your experience at the Festival of Social Science event/s do you think it's important that the Festival continues in future years? <Yes/No/Not Sure>

Finally we would like to ask a few questions about you...

What age group do you belong to?

Under 20
20s
30s
40s
50s
60s and over

Are you? Male Female

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

White British
White Other
Asian/Asian British
Black/Black British
Chinese

Mixed

Other (please state)

What best describes your current occupation?

School student

College/university student

Teacher

Academic/researcher

Business/private sector

Government/public sector

Journalist/media

Other (please state)

Please add any further comments here

Organiser questionnaire

Please note: As the questionnaire was distributed via SurveyMonkey the below content does not replicate the precise format.

Organising an event

In which of the following years did you attend a Festival of Social Science event?

[Multiple answers allowed]

Prior to 2008

2008

2009

2010

If you remember the name of the event/s and/or its main topic/s please write these here:

If the Festival of Social Science had not occurred, how likely would you have been to carry out the event/s? <Likely/Unlikely/Not Sure>

Please state why?

Taking one of your event/s as an example – what were the primary objectives of the event and with retrospect do you think these were achieved? (Please select a maximum of 3) <Objective/Achieved/Not Achieved>

To communicate information about the ESRC and its work

To communicate information about your own organisation/research group and its work

To increase awareness and understanding of the social sciences in general

To increase awareness and understanding of a specific social science subject or topic

To encourage greater participation in social science by young people

To introduce social science to a new/wider audience

To increase the take-up or application of your research findings (eg, research into practice)

To disseminate the results of your work

To increase media coverage of your work

To provide a forum for networking

To network with others about your work (eg, NGOs, interest groups, community groups, learned societies)

To develop opportunities for funding/co-funding of your work

To increase contact with the ESRC

Other (please state)

Did you receive feedback from participants at or post the event/s? <Yes/No/Not sure>

If you have organised more than one event, did participant feedback influence or shape your next event? <Yes/No/Not sure/Not applicable>

Impact of the event/s

Which of the following occurred after the event/s? <Yes/No/Not Sure/Not applicable>

Used information from the event/s in my own work/studies
Passed the information from the event/s to colleagues/friends or others
Further contact with attendees I met at the event/s
Further contact with public, private and third sector organisations involved in the event/s
Received media coverage generated by the event/s
Received increased website hits or social media contact generated by the event/s
Received contact from academics who had seen or heard about the event/s
Understood better the views of non-specialists towards your work
Used the event/s as a basis for working with others at the event/s (eg, academics, stakeholders) on further public engagement activities
Used the event/s as a basis for working with others at the event/s (eg, academics, stakeholders) on research funding applications
Fed into the development of new research questions and/or areas of your work
Fed into teaching

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the impact of the event/s? <Agree/Disagree/Not Sure>

It raised awareness of the social sciences in general
It raised awareness of the ESRC and its work
It raised awareness of the benefits social science brings to society
It raised awareness of my individual work
It raised awareness of my discipline
It raised awareness of my organisation/institution

Which of the following do you think are most important in creating an event with impact? (Please select a maximum of 3)

Large number of attendees
Small number of attendees

Professional interest of attendees
Attendees with general knowledge
Special interest of attendees

Appeal of subject/topic area
Controversy around subject/topic area
Quality of content related to subject/topic area

Media attention on event
Marketing of event
Organisation of event

Quality of speakers/engagers
Style of event (eg, novelty of format, inclusion of interactivity)

Other (please state)

The Festival overall

Following your experience of the Festival of Social Science event/s do you think it is important that the Festival continues in future years? <Yes/No/Not Sure>

Is there anything you would describe as 'unique' about the Festival of Social Sciences?

What would be the main benefit you would highlight to others considering organising a Festival of Social Science event?

What would be the main drawback you would highlight to others considering organising a Festival of Social Science event?

Are there any changes that you feel could be made to the Festival of Social Science to increase its impact? <Yes/No/If Yes Please State>

If you have organised more than one event, do you feel the ESRC have improved the Festival of Social Science over its duration?

<Yes/No/Not sure/Not applicable>

If yes, how?

Would you organise a further event associated to the Festival of Social Science <Yes/No/Not Sure>

Please state why?

Finally we would like to ask a few questions about you...

At the time of the event/s you organised, were you: (Please select all that apply)

A member of an ESRC Centre or Group

A member of an ESRC Programme or Network

Funded by the ESRC

Funded by a different research council, organisation or charity

Employed outside of the university sector (eg, in a school, by a charity, local government etc.)

At the time of the event/s you organised what best described your occupation?

College/university student

Teacher

Professor or director

Reader/senior lecturer/researcher/fellow

Lecturer/researcher/fellow

Junior/assistant researcher

Technician or other support staff

Business/private sector

Government/public sector
Other (please state)

In addition to the Festival event/s you mentioned in this survey how many other types of non-academic events have you held in the last 12 months?

0
1-2
3-4
5+

Would you like to spend more time, less time or about the same amount of time as you do now organising these types of non-academic focused events (outside and including the Festival of Social Science)?

I would like to spend more time
I am content with the amount of time I spend on this now
I would like to spend less time

How well equipped do you personally feel you are to organise and engage in non-academic events (outside and including the Festival of Social Science)?

Very well equipped
Fairly well equipped
Not very well equipped
Not at all equipped
Not sure
Not applicable

What would encourage you to participate in similar events (outside and including the Festival of Social Science) in future? <Yes/No/Not sure>

Experience of the Festival of Social Science
Department/organisation support/encouragement
Recognition in Research Excellence Framework (REF)
Contribution to own career
More time available for such events
More funding available for such events
If organising such events was easier
If more training was provided for such events
If more staff/colleagues were available to help organise such events
Other (Please state)

Please add any further comments here

Organiser interview questions

- 1) Can you tell me about the event/s you have run at the Festival of Social Science in the past? (eg, what subjects did they cover, who they were aimed at, what format did they take?)
- 2) Why did you want to run an event at the Festival of Social Science?
- 3) What would you say are the main benefits of organising an event at the Festival of Social Science? If you also took part in the event, what were the main (or additional) benefits of taking part?
- 4) Are there any downsides to running an event at the Festival of Social Science? If so, what are they?
- 5) Did you experience any professional outcomes from running an event during the Festival of Social Science (eg, new partnerships with other academics and organisations, feeding into research ideas or areas, establishing the basis for future funding, contact from local or national media?)
- 6) Did you experience any personal outcomes from running an event during the Festival of Social Science that you have not mentioned (eg, increased confidence in running such activities, raised individual profile, access to resources or assistance for public engagement?)
- 7) If your event involved non-academics, were there any specific benefits to you from that involvement?
- 8) Are there other types of events which you run which provide a similar experience with non-academics?
If so, what are these events?
How do these events compare with the Festival of Social Science?
- 9) Do you see these types of events as a permanent/long-lasting element of your work, or only important for a short time (eg, related to funding opportunities?)
- 10) Do you see the continuation of activities like the Festival of Social Science as important and if so why?
- 11) Finally, are there any further comments you would like to add?

ESRC staff interview questions

I would like to start by asking you about your role in the Festival of Social Science.

- 1) How many Festivals have you been involved in?
- 2) What roles have you taken?
- 3) Do you attend Festival events?
- 4) Who do you interact with (organisers/participants/others?)
- 5) In your view what would you say are the main short-term benefits of events at the Festival of Social Science for organisers?
- 6) In your view what would you say are the main short-term benefits of events at the Festival of Social Science for participants?
- 7) In your view what would you say are the main long-term benefits of events at the Festival of Social Science for organisers?
- 8) In your view what would you say are the main long-term benefits of events at the Festival of Social Science for participants?
- 9) In your view are there differences in the experience for academic and non-academic participants?
- 10) In your view are there any aspects of the Festival of Social Science that might be improved? If so, what are they?
- 11) Are there any elements of the Festival of Social Sciences that others running similar types of events could learn from?
- 12) From your perspective are there impacts of the Festival of Social Science that go uncaptured by the evaluations that occur at the time?
- 13) Do you see the continuation of activities like the Festival of Social Science as important and if so why?
- 14) Finally, are there any further comments you would like to add?

Appendix Two

Demographics of attendees	n	%*
Gender		
Male	9	26%
Female	22	63%
Age group		
Under 20	0	0%
20s	1	3%
30s	11	31%
40s	9	26%
50s	5	14%
60s and over	5	14%
Ethnic origin		
White British	16	46%
White Other	10	29%
Asian/Asian British	2	6%
Black/Black British	1	3%
Chinese	0	0%
Mixed	1	3%
Other	3	9%
Current occupation		
School Student	1	3%
College/University student	2	6%
Teacher	3	9%
Academic/Researcher	6	18%
Business/Private Sector	5	14%
Government/Public Sector	9	26%
Journalist/Media	2	6%
Other	9	26%

*Small variations in response to these questions result in some % not totalling 100.

Table 3: Attendee demographic details

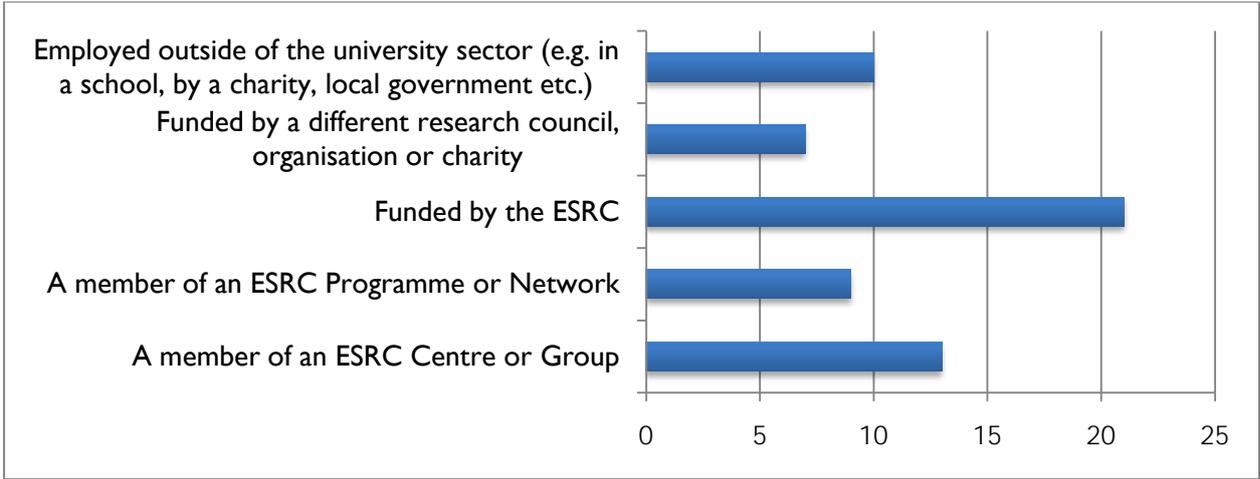


Figure 5: Organiser employment/funding

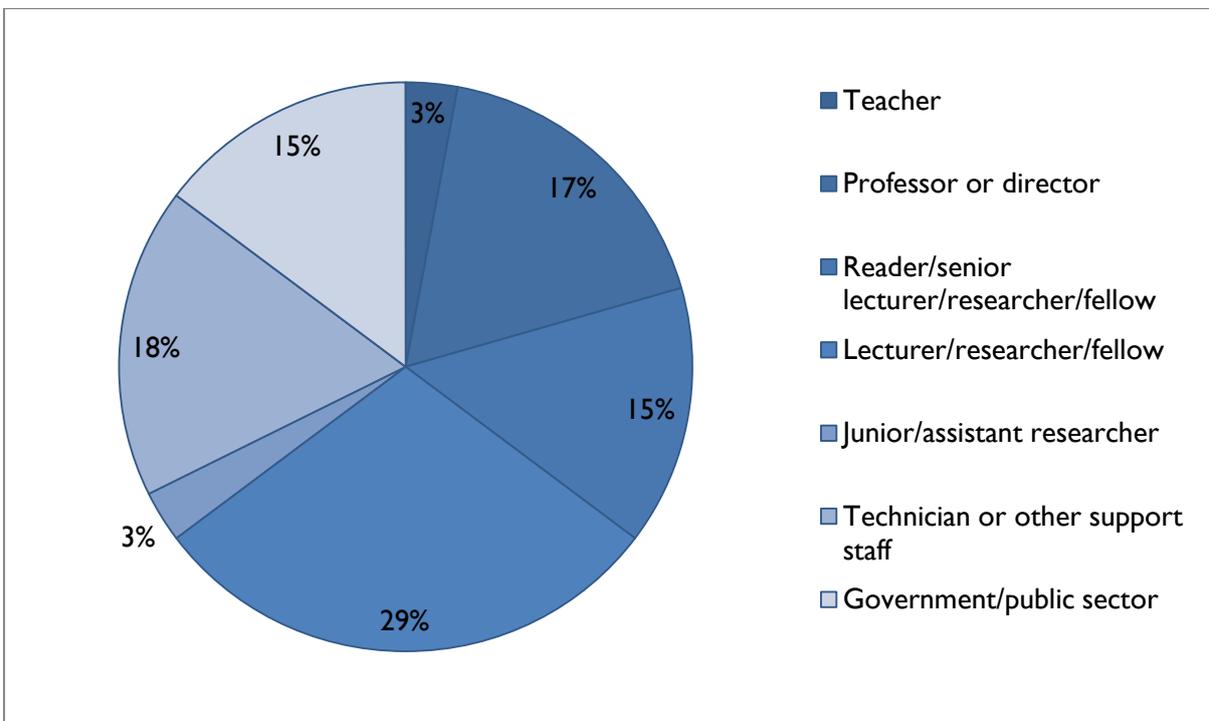


Figure 6: Organiser occupation

Appendix Three

Year	Events									Organisers			Audiences												
	Number of events	Regional distribution (% Outside London)	Event type/s ⁱ							Media coverage – N of mentions	Most popular reason for organising	Event overall	Estimated audience reach	Audiences targeted				Satisfaction with events	Outcome of event					Use after event*	Would attend further events
			Arts/Theatre/Film	Discussions/Debate	Hands-on/Exhibitions	Seminars/Workshops	Multi-Format	Online	Other					General audience	Young people	Some knowledge of topic	Professionals		Raised awareness of social science	Raised awareness of ESRC	Raised awareness of benefits of social science	Increased knowledge	More interested in social science		
2010**	130	78% n=102)	6%	39%	21%	22%	64%	4%	9%	136	Increase awareness & understanding of specific SS subject/topic (71%)	100% very or fairly satisfied overall	18,000	39%	29%	17%	15%	98% very or fairly satisfied overall	77%	81%	81%	96%	67%	70%-87%	97%
2009	110	62% n=84	2%	30%	8%	34%	30%	7%	11%	105	Increase awareness & understanding of specific SS subject/topic (81%)	100% very or fairly satisfied overall	12,000	35%	29%	24%	18%	99% very or fairly satisfied overall	71%	77%	78%	95%	56%	76%-89%	99%
2008	91	70% n=64	16% A	50% A	20%	40% A	24%	20%	??	57	Increase awareness & understanding of specific SS subject/topic (72%)	98% very or fairly satisfied overall	4,800	37%	25%	26%	12%	98% very or fairly satisfied overall	69%	76%	66%	88%	51%	36%-63%	96%
2007	76	63% n=48	32%	32%	7%	36%	??	3%	5%	112	Increase awareness & understanding of specific SS subject/topic (67%)	100% very or fairly satisfied overall	4,600	39%	21%	28%	12%	97% very or fairly satisfied overall	63%	72%	61%	83%	48%	31% - 57%	??
2006	57	48% n=27	2%	23%	0%	44%	??	4%	7%	106	Increase awareness & understanding of specific SS subject/topic (73%)	100% satisfied with quality and organisation	3,800	33%	??	??	??	90% provide positive rating overall	??	??	??	13%	??	6%-37%	76%

Table 4: Key evaluation data: 2006-2010

Table 4 Notes

Recording of some elements of the evaluation has varied over the years. Categories here have been amalgamated and may differ slightly to those referred to in some individual evaluation reports, or in some cases can appear in multiple format categories. Where data is not accurately captured at all in a prior evaluation it is indicated by '??', where it is based on an approximate figure estimated in a prior evaluation report this is indicated with **A**.

* Responses are combined from four possible expected actions. In 2010 this was 'use of information in own work/studies', 'pass information from event to colleagues', 'make further contact with people you met at event', and 'seek out further information on the event topic'. Due to slight variations in wording over the years, the minimum and maximum per cent who recorded they would carry out one of these actions is recorded.

** **2010** - Evaluation based on feedback from 2,005 attendees and 99 organisers. **2009** – Evaluation based on feedback from 1,285 attendees and from 67 organisers. **2008** – Evaluation based on feedback from 839 attendees and 68 organisers. **2007** - Evaluation based on feedback from 854 attendees and 57 organisers. **2006** - Evaluation based on feedback from 539 attendees and 40 organisers.