

University of Dundee

Bringing Dundee Together

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Bringing Dundee Together

Public Engagement helps universities to create new ways of co-producing, accessing, and sharing knowledge. There is, however, no single path to successful engagement with local communities. Time scales, funding, communication skills and equitable power relationships are the challenges that these forms of partnerships face.

In this pilot project, funded by the IIDF* we explored how to build in-depth collaboration with a variety of audiences in Dundee, especially voices from marginalised and socially excluded groups that are not always heard in research and policy design.

The aim of the pilot was to explore how trusting relationships can be built between the University of Dundee and external Dundee-based partners. During our two engagement workshops:

- We explored the best pathways for communication and mutual collaboration in addressing health inequalities.
- We integrated the voices, views, and values of different stakeholders in exploring the possibilities of what an Interdisciplinary Public Engagement Hub at the University could look like.

Our objectives were to:

- Develop a framework to maximise the mutual benefits from involvement, and collaboration between students, researchers, teaching staff and the third sector, health practitioners and community organizations
- Work closely with external partners to inform future research, teaching and the co-production of educational and training resources
- Monitor and evaluate this pilot and its methodology to make a case for further development in the broad area of public engagement and inequalities

Our outcomes were:

- An illustrated infographic describing the conditions that will support strong partnerships with local communities.
- Moving towards the initial steps in building a model of collaboration that will be the foundation for an interdisciplinary Public Engagement Hub on health inequalities.
- The identification of strategies to build training in engagement for staff and students.
- A series of drawing images on the key principles/structure/vision of this Hub

This was an inter-disciplinary project involving staff from the Schools of Dentistry; Medicine; Health Sciences; Humanities, Social Sciences and Law; and the Directorate of RIS

During both workshops, it was suggested that young people experiencing multiple vulnerabilities or at risk of homelessness living in the city of Dundee and the organisations that support them should be the initial target audience for *Bringing Dundee Together*, working in close partnership with Schools of Medicine; Dentistry; and Health Sciences at the University of Dundee. If pilot working between these groups was successful, then the scope of *Bringing Dundee Together* can be scaled to involve other groups and stakeholders from the City and the University.

Everybody agreed that the best way to develop such an initiative would be by learning from a 12-month programme of pilot activity. Our workshops had demonstrated the effectiveness of developing activities through collaborative discussions, and it was suggested that this approach should be used as a way of developing and monitoring projects and initiatives that might sit inside a pilot programme.

In the first 12 months the *Bringing Dundee Together* partners should aim to establish 2-3 collaborative projects (Three potential projects are described below).

- A volunteering scheme for UG and PGT students within the Schools of Medicine; Dentistry; and Health Sciences, to work with homeless young people. A wide range of potential support activities were discussed that could bring learning and development opportunities for both students and the young people of Dundee.
- An action orientated research project focused on 1] understanding the healthcare needs of homeless young people living in the City, and 2] co-creating improvements to existing pathways that would improve access and deliver better healthcare outcomes.
- A community-based project that would link young homeless people into a wide range of initiatives in the city as they make their transition into adult living. The *Bringing Dundee Together* partners can use their collective convening power in the City to enable these connections.

It was suggested that these projects should be developed through further workshop discussions. More voices and stakeholders could be brought into these discussions as required. Feasibility work could be undertaken to explore potential funding and support for each initiative. It was agreed that health and social care practitioners and young people who were service-users of Dundee organisations should be actively involved in the co-creation of all projects. All developments should be guided by the principles of the *Manifesto for Collaboration* developed in workshop 1.

To take such a programme of activity forward, a 12-month short life working group made up of *Bringing Dundee Together* partners (with representation from young people who are service users of homeless organisations) should be convened to agree these suggested actions and plan next steps.

To read the full report on this project, and to view the infographics created, please visit the [Discovery Portal page](#).

***Impact and Innovation Development Fund (IIDF)** is a University of Dundee internal fund that aims to increase interdisciplinary working opportunities and research collaborations – both internally and externally with partners and industry.