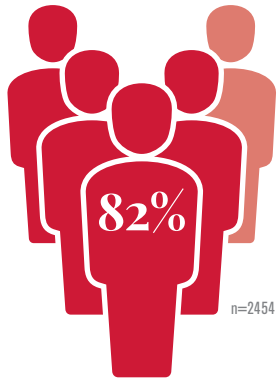


# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT BY RESEARCHERS

In 2015, a Consortium of 15 funders of UK public research<sup>1</sup> commissioned TNS-BMRB to conduct research to provide independent evidence to inform future strategies for supporting researchers to engage with the public. It also wanted to update the understanding gained from a survey of scientists and engineers, published by the Royal Society in 2006<sup>2</sup>. A sample of 2,454 research staff of all disciplines working in universities, research institutes and clinical settings across the UK were surveyed<sup>3</sup> and there was a separate web survey of 269 public engagement enablers (staff who support and facilitate researchers in their PE activities)<sup>4</sup>. These are the key findings from research published on [www.wellcome.ac.uk/PERSurvey](http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/PERSurvey)

Percentages may add to 99% or 101% due to the effects of rounding. Where multiple responses were allowed at a question, percentages will sum to more than 100%.

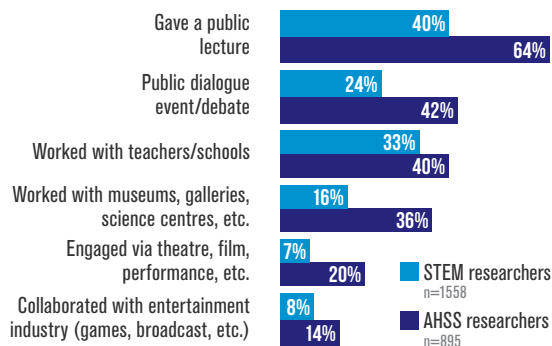
## EXTENT AND NATURE OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN 2015



Most researchers have done at least one form of public engagement in the past 12 months<sup>5</sup>, though activity is often infrequent.

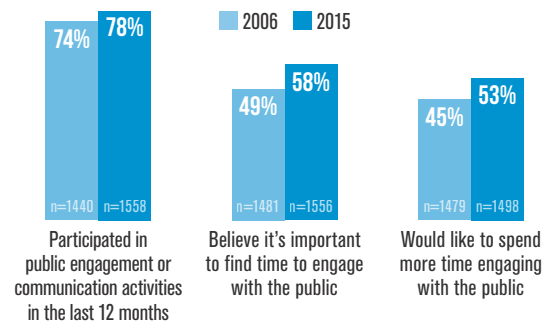
AHSS (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences) researchers are more active than STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) researchers in communication and public engagement about their research.

### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (2015)



Between 2006 and 2015, there has been a significant shift in attitudes; public engagement is valued more. Yet there has only been a small rise in the proportion of STEM researchers who undertake public engagement or communication.

### STEM RESEARCHERS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

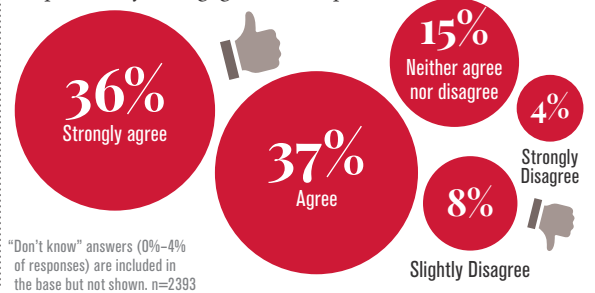


## WHAT IS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND WHY DO IT?

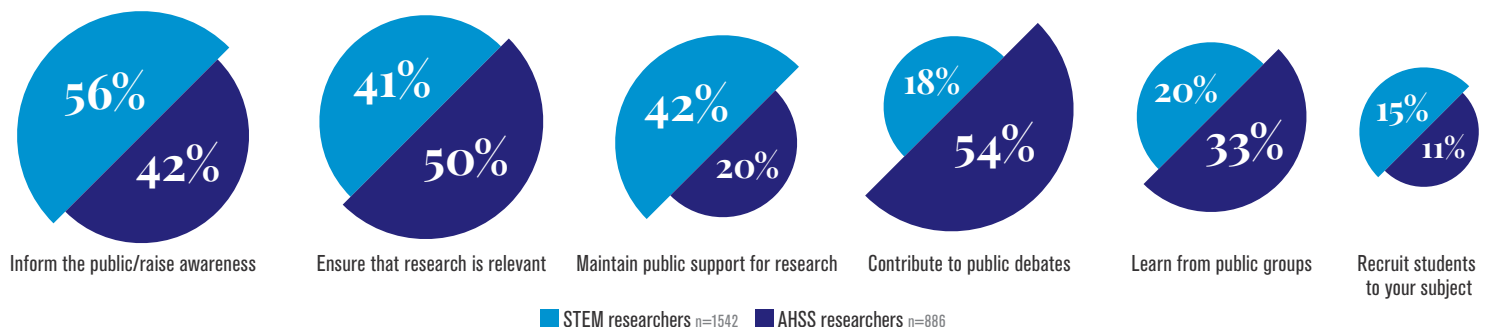
A high proportion of Researchers (AHSS and STEM) understand public engagement as a two-way dialogue, rather than a one-way communication.



Most researchers agreed that they had a moral responsibility to engage with the public.



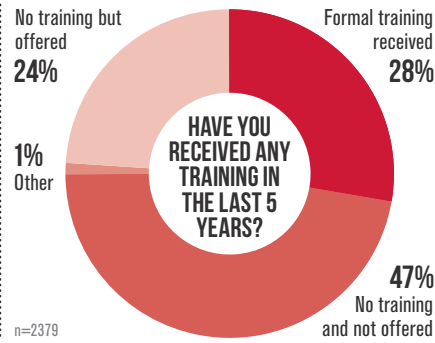
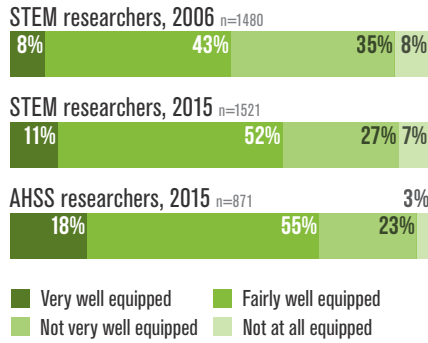
## WHAT ARE THE MAIN BENEFITS OF RESEARCHERS ENGAGING WITH THE PUBLIC? (SELECTED KEY FINDINGS)



1. Funders are Wellcome Trust; Royal Society; British Academy; Royal Academy of Engineering; Academy of Medical Sciences; Royal Society of Chemistry; Research Councils UK; UK Funding Bodies (HEFCE, HEFCW, Scottish Funding Council and Department for Employment and Learning - Northern Ireland); Department for Business, Innovation and Skills; Department for Health (National Institute for Health Research); Health and Care Research Wales, Welsh Government; and the Scottish Government. The project is also supported by Universities UK. 2. The Royal Society (2006) *Survey of factors affecting science communication by scientists and engineers* 3. There were 2,454 responses and a 22% response rate. 4. There were 269 responses and a 33% response rate. 5. Public engagement activities as defined by the Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research. Signed by 52 research funders, the Concordat sets out clear expectations for research organisations, researcher managers and supporters and researchers themselves. The Concordat aims to strengthen existing good practice in public engagement by ensuring it is valued, recognised and supported.

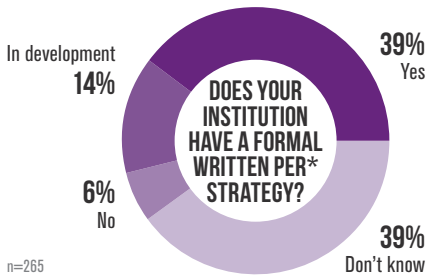
# HOW WELL EQUIPPED ARE RESEARCHERS IN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT?

STEM researchers in 2015 feel better equipped to do public engagement than in 2006 although only a minority feel "very" well equipped. Arts and humanities researchers were more confident in their public engagement skills.



Just over a quarter of all researchers in 2015 had received formal training in either communications or public engagement in the previous five years. Informal "on-the-job" learning was more common.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND POLICY

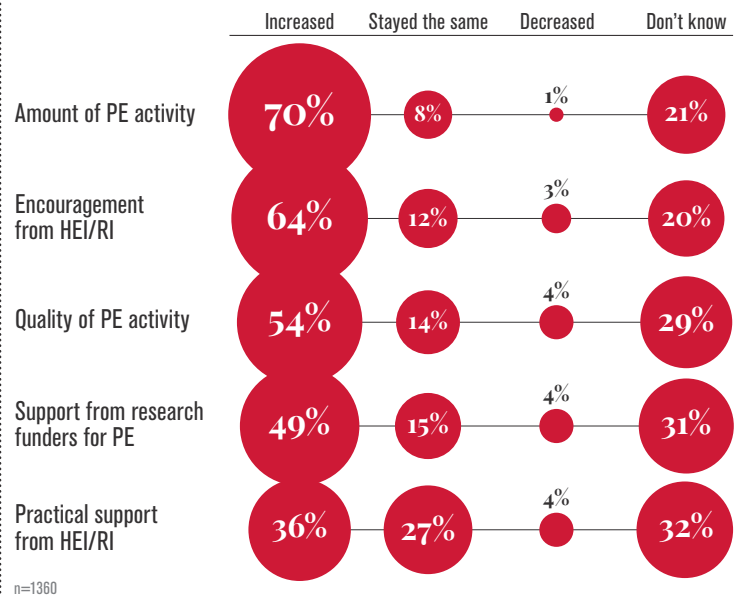


Developing and implementing a formal institutional strategy or policy seems a work in progress across the sector, according to public engagement enablers.

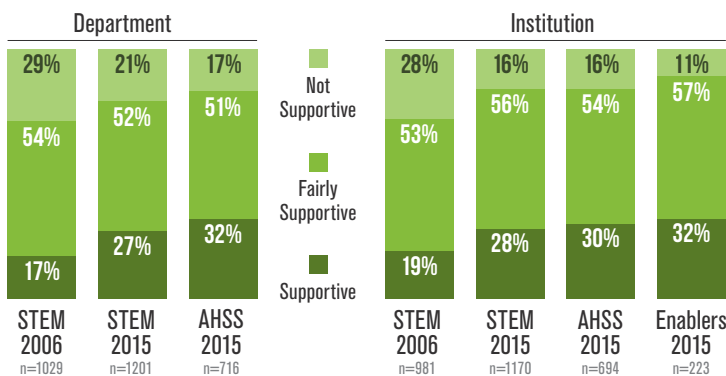
\*Public Engagement for Research  
\*Don't know" answers (2%–4% of responses) are included in the base but not shown.

The results indicate a perception of culture change over the past decade. Researchers (and also enablers) perceive an increase in public engagement volume, quality and support over the longer-term.

### PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGE IN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY AND SUPPORT IN THE PAST DECADE (ALL RESEARCHERS WHO HAVE BEEN IN RESEARCH FOR 10 YEARS OR MORE)



### ARE YOUR INSTITUTION AND DEPARTMENT GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE TOWARDS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT? (ALL RESEARCHERS)

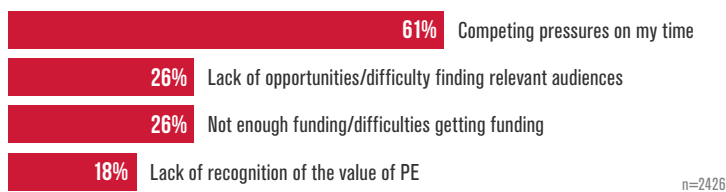


"Don't know" or "It varies" answers (18% to around 30% of responses) have been removed from the base and are not shown.

## BARRIERS AND INCENTIVES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

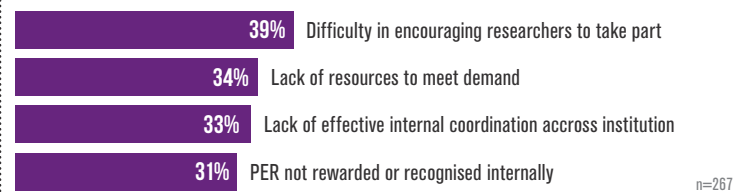
Competing pressures on time emerged as the most prominent barrier for researchers undertaking public engagement in 2015.

### WHAT ARE THE MAIN FACTORS STOPPING YOU PERSONALLY FROM GETTING MORE INVOLVED IN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT? (ALL RESEARCHERS, TOP 4 RESULTS)



Enablers cited challenges related to persuading researchers to participate, suggesting researchers are not always aware of the opportunities on offer.

### KEY CHALLENGES AFFECTING THE ROLE OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ENABLERS (TOP 4 RESULTS)



### WHAT ARE THE MAIN FACTORS THAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO GET MORE INVOLVED IN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT? (ALL RESEARCHERS, TOP 4 RESULTS)



### REWARD AND RECOGNITION STRUCTURES IN PLACE (ALL ENABLERS)

