

Engaged and Participatory Research Fund Awardees

2025-2026



Exeter
INNOVATION



Engaged and Participatory Research Fund Awardees

Congratulations to all the successful applicants for the Engaged and Participatory Research Fund! Awardees have been selected from across the University to deliver collaborative research projects that draw upon a range of expertise for the benefit of all partners.

Read on for some more details about these projects and the applicants behind them.



Dr Daniel Fountain (Lead Applicant)

Faculty of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

External partners - Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, Crafts Council

Amount of award - £4116

'Queerly Made' is the UK's first major project investigating modern and contemporary queer craft, drawing on an extensive history of crafts being used by LGBTQ+ artists to express identity and form community. This project, in partnership with Crafts Council and the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (MIMA), directly addresses this by pioneering a collaborative methodology rooted in social action. Engaged and Participatory Research Funding will enable the co-curation of objects from the Middlesbrough Collection, and the delivery of free workshops by LGBTQ+ makers, to bring cultural engagement opportunities to the Tees Valley.

Dr Sally Palmer (Lead Applicant)

Faculty of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

External partners - Dorset Local Nature Partnership / Dorset Wildlife Trust

Amount of award - £5144.30

This project draws on the expertise of the Dorset Local Nature Partnership, hosted by Dorset Wildlife Trust and its Young Content Creators Scheme, and will explore what influences environmental engagement among diverse youth, and adolescents' understanding of social and environmental justice within this. Four interactive workshops will explore environmental issues, barriers to environmental engagement, and the cultivation of creative outputs, which will be disseminated in academic and community spaces, as well as becoming embedded in community practice.



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Engaged and Participatory Research Fund Awardees

Dr George Tarling (Lead applicant), Dr Nicholas Bremner (Co-applicant)

Faculty of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

External partners - Exeter College

Amount of award - £7350

Building on a 'Digital Detox' pilot programme undertaken by Exeter College, which aimed to encourage a healthy screentime balance and greater consideration of phone use amongst young people, this project will assess the impacts of smartphone use in an educational context. Research Days, Knowledge Exchange Visits, focus groups, and workshops will be used to share expertise between partners, stakeholders, and students, and address considerable ongoing debates around this topic.



Professor Marisa Lazzari (Lead applicant), Professor Ioana Oltean (Co-applicant)

Faculty of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

External partners - Fundación Tiempos

Amount of award - £9925

This project brings together the University of Exeter and Fundación Tiempos to co-create sustainable biocultural heritage strategies in Northwestern Argentina, part of the South American Andes, in response to community needs identified during previous work. Through this work, the project team aim to improve local agency and community networks for autonomous heritage and tourism initiatives, promote broader heritage and development policy change, and align with sustainability goals at both the University of Exeter and globally.

Dr Amy Cutler (Lead applicant), Caroline Walter (Co-applicant)

Faculty of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

External partners - Harwell Restoration

Amount of award - £4600

This is the R&D phase for the first serious game created for a heritage risk management context. It involves community playtesting and community consultation workshops, and it is targeted specifically at the 43% of Devon's heritage organisations which are volunteer-run. Drawing on existing disaster preparedness training undertaken by staff in Special Collections, the project team will co-design and prototype an interactive simulation which will conclude with the production of an portable model, providing a test case for further development and collaboration.



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Dr Andrew McGovern (Lead Applicant)

Faculty of Health and Life Sciences

External partners - Inclusion Health Devon CIC

Amount of award - £2500

This project is a partnership between the University of Exeter Diabetes Research Group and Inclusion Health Devon, a specialist GP service for people experiencing homelessness. The project will aim to understand the testing gaps in people with diabetes after pancreatic disease (DAPD) seen in this service and explore the acceptability and impact of offering these tests. This study will help to improve understanding of how to deliver effective diabetes care to some of the most vulnerable people, and act as a model for ongoing University-NHS collaboration.



Dr Bert Bond (Lead Applicant)

Faculty of Health and Life Sciences

External partners - Université Paris Saclay, Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Amount of award - £2200

Past research has demonstrated that repeated periods of arm blood flow restriction, called "ischaemic preconditioning" (IPC) can improve blood vessel health, as well as exercise health in athletes. This project explores whether IPC can improve blood vessel health and the ability to exercise in people with Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD), who can experience an increased risk of cardiovascular disease. Building on positive feedback from a recent PPIE event, funding will be used to establish better links with the local PAD community, and consider the feasibility of a future trial co-created with a PAD patient cohort.

Dr Liliane Mukaremera (Lead applicant)

Faculty of Health and Life Sciences

External partners - Infectious Disease institute, Kampala/ Makerere University, and King Faisal Hospital Kigali Rwanda

Amount of award - £1465

Dr Mukaremera's research focuses on understanding how fungal pathogens cause diseases in humans, to help design the best treatment options. These diseases are most prevalent in developing countries, leading to Dr Mukaremera's collaboration with healthcare professionals in Kampala-Uganda and Kigali-Rwanda. The project will include a patient and public event to raise awareness of fungal infections, working with healthcare providers to identify challenges which can be addressed through future collaboration



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Samuel Trethewey (Lead applicant)

Faculty of Health and Life Sciences

External partners - Space Youth Services, and Devon County Council

Amount of award - £4000

This project seeks to forge a new, collaborative, participatory research relationship between academics at the University of Exeter, the Public Health Team at Devon County Council, and young people in Devon, focussing on the impact of rurality and deprivation on young people's mental health. Working closely with Space Youth Services, we will use a variety of methods to engage with young people on rural mental health, leading to workshops run with a Young People's Research Advisory Group.



Jessica Marshall (Lead applicant)

Faculty of Health and Life Sciences

External partners - Yourspace Sutton

Amount of award - £6450

Belonging is a powerful predictor of resilience, connection, and positive health behaviours. This pilot project will explore belonging as a mechanism for wellbeing, addressing the previously limited measurement of belonging's importance in community settings. Comparing levels of belonging and wellbeing amongst Yourspace Sutton volunteers, the study will explore new evidence and insights into the importance of belonging in this context.

Professor Emma Pitchforth (Lead applicant), Dr Jo Morrison (Co-applicant)

Faculty of Health and Life Sciences

External partners - Somerset NHS Foundation Trust

Amount of award - £5125

Following public feedback, this project will use Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) to inform developments in the cervical screening process. The most common age for cervical cancer is 30-34-years, coinciding with the age of childbirth in the United Kingdom, but there are many challenges associated with accessing screening appointments for new mothers. The project builds on an existing feasibility study, looking to improve uptake in this service through the development of NHS recommendations and increasing accessibility.



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Dr Steven Palmer (Lead Applicant)

Faculty of Environment, Science and Economy

External partners - Friends of the River Exe, and Tidelines

Amount of award - £7950

Building on existing community initiatives (Tidelines, FORE, CAG Devon), this project will convene two participatory workshops linking researchers, community groups, and local authorities. A central output will be an open-access and user-friendly webGIS platform showcasing environmental monitoring, management, and governance activities across the Exe catchment - a living, interactive database that visualises collective efforts, supports coordination, and strengthens long-term connections between research, policy, and community practice.



Professor Michael Leyshon (Lead applicant), Professor Catherine Leyshon (Co-applicant)

Faculty of Environment, Science and Economy

External partners - CLEAR Emotional Trauma and Therapy Specialists

Amount of award - £1300

Michael and Catherine Leyshon are co-directors of the Social Innovation Group (SIG) which focuses on place-based, person-centred approaches to care. The aim of this project is to build a strong working relationship between SIG and CLEAR. Together, they will explore how trauma affects people's lives, and how voluntary services can respond more effectively to individuals' needs.

Peter Lefort (Lead applicant)

Professional Services

External partners - Shalyn Limited, and WinACC Winchester Action on the Climate Crisis

Amount of award - £5025

This project seeks to bring the Positive Tipping Points Toolkit to underrepresented and marginalised groups, exploring how these communities engage with Exeter's research into systems change. Through interactive workshops in Winchester and Bristol, we will use the Toolkit in new community contexts to better understand the impact of the methodologies within the toolkit on shifting mindsets, and to inform future climate change research.



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