

Section 1: Planning for impact

Introduction

This section will help you plan your communications activity and focus your communications on where they can make the most impact.

By working through this section you will be able to:

- understand the basic principles of good research communications
- identify the resources required for your communications
- hear what funders are looking for in dissemination or communications plans
- identify the audiences that you will need to engage with as a priority
- see the range of communications channels available and decide the right ones for you
- set out your approach in a simple communications strategy.

There are three parts to this section:

1. Using strategic communications planning to increase impact.
2. Identifying and prioritising audiences.
3. Choosing the right communications channels.

Read some funders' perspectives on the growing importance of good research communications, as well as some tips for laying out your communications plans at the funding application stage.

[Read about funders' views on research communications.](#)

Using strategic communications planning to increase impact

Good communications need to be planned, resourced and delivered. The most systematic way of doing this is to create a simple communications strategy.

It is important to set aside time to create a well-planned strategy. Increasingly, funders are looking for evidence on how you will meaningfully engage policy, practice and public audiences with your research findings. A clear, innovative communications strategy could increase the appeal of your research to funders and, ultimately, its impact.

Use a template to set your communications objectives.

Read about how to identify and secure communications support and resource.

Develop your communications strategy with a template.

Identifying and prioritising audiences

If you understand who your most important audiences are, you can tailor your communications to their specific interests, needs and motivations.

The better you know your audiences, and the more you tailor your communications to them, the more effective your communications will be. This may seem obvious but is often overlooked, even by seasoned communicators.

Find out how to identify and prioritise your audiences.

Read about engaging public and patient organisations with your findings.

Choosing the right communications channels

You can use many different channels to transmit information or messages to specific audiences, and the number is constantly growing. Examples include conferences, journals, blogs, websites, email and social media, such as Twitter and Facebook.

Being able to identify the channels that are right for your audiences, your research and the resources you have available is important.

The decisions you make here will dictate how you allocate your time and budget, and will also give a strong indication of the skills you will need as your project progresses.

Read a guide to communications channels.

Find out about social media in research.

Learn how to plan engagement events for your research.