Engagement at Cardiff

Partnerships to promote social cohesion and improve levels of health, wealth and wellbeing
A modern university’s civic role has always been a vital part of its work.

We provide jobs and help power the local economy, we carry out important research that impacts upon the lives of citizens and we engage our communities through mutually beneficial outreach work.

It can be argued that our civic responsibilities are now more important than ever. The partnership with our communities has taken on a renewed purpose since the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union.

We have an important part to play alongside the rest of society in bringing communities together and helping heal some of the divisions that have emerged around Brexit.

Cardiff University is in the process of putting together a fresh vision for its civic mission work following the successes since we launched our Transforming Communities programme.

This report highlights many of those successes, from our flagship engagement projects to other outstanding community activities taking place around the University.

Over the coming years we must continue to build a university that is global in outlook but also at the very heart of its local communities.

Professor Colin Riordan
President and Vice-Chancellor
We promote and celebrate the Welsh language.

Through our Welsh for All scheme we offer students across all academic disciplines the opportunity to learn Welsh.

We contribute more than £2.9bn to the economy.

For every £1 we spend we generate more than £6.

We are an official Living Wage employer.

Wales’ 1st university to be accredited with the status.

1,000 of our students volunteer on projects in the community each year.
Engaging with our communities

Community Gateway is a university-community platform to collaborate with communities and develop meaningful relationships, helping make Grangetown an even better place. A wide variety of resident-led projects have been formed through brokering partnerships between the University and community. We have transformed an old bowls pavilion into a thriving community venue, supported the development of a Grangetown business forum and helped set up a running club, a youth forum, a girls’ hub, a mental health awareness network, a philosophy café and a schools’ advisory panel.

Engaged with more than 2,000 community members through over 40 university-community projects
Transforming local news

Social and digital media has changed our daily lives. Whilst newspaper sales continue to decline, online traffic figures have grown steadily. Yet many online news outlets are put together by individuals with no formal training. The Centre for Community Journalism is responding to this by offering networking, information and training for hyperlocal or community journalists and by providing advice to politicians on connecting digitally with their communities. Thousands of people have been trained in digital media skills, contributing to strengthened community news provision in Wales and beyond. The Centre also has a key role in training communities to counter ‘fake news’.

Over 32,000 people from 130 countries worldwide have been trained in community journalism.
Reducing poverty and promoting health internationally

Responding to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals and the Wales for Africa programme, Cardiff University is working in partnership with the University of Namibia. The two organisations collaborate through the Phoenix Project to enable shared learning and educational resources, staff/student exchange, infrastructure support and development, and joint research. The Phoenix Project provided the first ever anaesthetics training in Namibia leading to large numbers of medical officers and students being trained which will transform healthcare and save countless lives. The project has also supported many other activities in Namibia such as encouraging a new generation of software programmers, improving the maths skills of students, equipping police with life-saving skills after road collisions and studying and supporting local languages.

“Cardiff University has shown a new, responsive and revitalizing approach to international development at the institutional level that aims to strengthen capacity and embraces all university departments.”

Prof Kenneth Matengu, Director of External and International Relations, University of Namibia
Boosting health and wellbeing through culture

The power of culture is harnessed to help tackle poverty in Wales as part of a pioneering project with Cardiff University as a key partner. The Welsh Government’s Fusion: Tackling Poverty through Culture programme inspired young people and adults who would not normally have the opportunities to take part in culture and the arts. Our Strong Communities, Healthier People project took the lead for the Cardiff and Merthyr Pioneer area, engaging with hundreds of participants through numerous activities and projects, such as geocaching and heritage trails.

Playing a pivotal role in the Cardiff Capital Region

We study and participate in the ongoing development of the Cardiff Capital Region, an area encompassing the ten local authorities of south-east Wales. Bringing together politicians, businesses and community groups, we are at the forefront of debates on the future of the city region. Our provision of research and evidence is playing a significant role in the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, and our students and staff are directly helping to shape the region’s future.
Enriching the curriculum

We inspire young people by bringing our research into formal and informal learning in schools and colleges.

Universe in the Classroom

Schools involved in Universe in the Classroom are being offered a unique and exciting opportunity to explore the exotic wonders of the Universe from their classrooms using professional telescopes. To date these physics-focused events, workshops and exhibitions have directly reached thousands of people, educating the pupils and professionals of tomorrow.

Clever coding

By sharing expertise, giving school teachers and pupils the confidence and knowledge to undertake computer science projects, we are helping the next generation to develop skills to take up careers in the increasingly complex world of coding and cyber security. This has resulted in achieving a Welsh Government Technocamp hub status to enhance the new computer science curriculum in schools.

“Programming is fun and better when it is practised more. It’s really rewarding when you debug something and you rack your brain for ages – then it works”

Year 9 pupil

Reached more than 17,000 people, of which over 7,000 are situated in Wales.
Encouraging modern foreign languages

The Modern Languages Mentoring Scheme, funded by the Welsh Government as part of its five-year ‘Global Futures’ (2015-2020) programme, supports modern languages in schools in Wales. The project trains undergraduates to act as mentors to Year 9 pupils, acting as ambassadors for modern languages and the value of a global mindset. The project aims to increase the number of Welsh pupils taking one or more modern languages at GCSE.

Life Sciences Challenge

PhD students at Cardiff have designed a life science quiz which is run as an inter-school competition for year 10 pupils across Wales. It gives pupils the opportunity to meet young scientists and be inspired to consider the possibilities of scientific careers.
Participating in public events

We deliver a diverse range of public and community events covering the breadth of University expertise from physics to philosophy.

Contributing to the Welsh language

We are proud to be part of the National Eisteddfod for Wales. As well as participating in the country’s largest cultural event, we also have the opportunity to interact with visitors from Wales and beyond to share information about our work. Our presence at the National Eisteddfod showcases the range of high-quality contributions we make to Wales and the Welsh language through a series of lectures, workshops and interactive activities. Festival-goers learn about our latest research such as a £1.8m community-driven project that aims to develop a Welsh language resource called CorCenCC – Corpws Cenedlaethol Cymraeg Cyfoes – the National Corpus of Contemporary Welsh.
Working with festivals

Cardiff University and the Green Man festival have joined forces. The partnership aims to provide student internships, fun and interactive science engagement and research activities at the festival.

Shedding light on innovative work

The Cardiff Series at the prestigious international Hay Festival provides fascinating talks and presentations on topical subjects such as whether viruses could be good for us, how networks intermingle with our daily lives and whether food certifications are worth the paper they are written on. This is a popular series which sells out quickly.

Local curiosity

At our Public Uni events academics present their most exciting research in short, 10-minute chunks to members of the public. Only an inquisitive mind is required to attend the regular events which are held in Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff.
Discovering our historic past

Since 2011, the CAER Heritage Project has been working with community development organisation Action in Caerau and Ely (ACE), local residents and schools to explore the history and archaeology of Caerau and Ely, Cardiff. The project helps people of all ages to connect with their prehistoric, medieval and modern past through a wide range of initiatives focused around Caerau Iron Age Hillfort. Since it began, thousands of community members have engaged in research activities, working with us to uncover vital details about 6,000 years of history.
Developing Cardiff’s creative economy

Our Creative Economy team actively support the breadth of Cardiff’s creative economy, encouraging innovation, partnership working and knowledge exchange. Creative Cardiff launched in 2015 and is now a strong member network; connecting those working in any creative organisation, business or job in Cardiff and the city region. By collaborating with a wide range of stakeholders we aspire to make Cardiff a creative capital.

World’s first SPARK

We aim to develop innovative solutions to societal problems through collaborative and interdisciplinary research activity within the world’s first Social Science Research Park (SPARK). Our researchers are already making a difference: we are effectively tackling smoking uptake in schools; working to reduce violent crime; and contributing towards changes in services given to victims of domestic and sexual violence.
Raising science awareness

Brain fun

We give members of the community insights into the power and mystery of the brain at our annual Brain Games event. Held at National Museum Cardiff and aimed mainly at children and their families, the fun-filled event explains how the brain works and raises awareness of neuroscience research. Brain Games also tours science festivals, schools and public events across Wales and the UK.
Sustaining our environment

Members of the public from all over the UK have been supporting the Otter Project for over 25 years by reporting roadkill to a network of staff and volunteers from organisations such as Natural Resources Wales and local wildlife groups who work with the University in analysing data from post-mortems. The information gained is used in national evaluations of the health of our natural environment and supports local organisations to target their wildlife conservation efforts. Otters are secretive and rarely seen; our Otter Project provides a rare opportunity to learn about otter biology at public events.

Improving biodiversity

The last 60 years has seen the loss of natural habitat for a range of pollinators including bees. To reverse this trend the Pharmabees project is working with community groups across the city to create pollinator friendly community spaces. Aiming to improve biodiversity and create a welcoming environment, Pharmabees is increasing the number of bees and beekeepers in Cardiff and beyond. Working with groups such as the Women’s Institute to visit schools, Pharmabees provides hives and educates pupils on the importance of bees, which improves health, wellbeing and sustainability through community engagement.
Understanding the nation’s health

HealthWise Wales is an opportunity for everyone in Wales aged 16 or over to take part in research. Funded by Welsh Government and led by Cardiff University, individuals answer simple questions about health and lifestyle which helps researchers to better understand the health of people living in Wales. Over 10,000 people have already participated in this study and we continue to campaign for more to help the NHS in Wales plan for the future. Join us: www.healthwisewales.gov.wales

Ready for race day

The University-sponsored Cardiff Half Marathon inspires hundreds of staff, students, alumni and community members to put on their trainers and join elite runners on the streets of Cardiff.

Novice runners from Grangetown and Merthyr Tydfil were supported to follow in the footsteps of Olympic Champion Mo Farah and take part in the IAAF Cardiff World Half Marathon in March 2016.

The Grangetown runners went on to launch the Run Grangetown running group with the help of our Community Gateway project.

In addition, our #TeamCardiff runners raise vital funds for the University’s world-leading research in areas such as cancer and neuroscience and mental health.

We have pledged our continued support as title sponsor of the Cardiff Half Marathon until at least 2020.

“We’re all novice runners and while we’re not likely to trouble the Olympic Games just yet, we’re an enthusiastic bunch. The new running group will encourage us to run regularly and train with fellow novices. It’s fun, sociable and helps us all to keep fit.”

Ali Abdi, Community Gateway Partnerships Manager and a member of Run Grangetown