

- **No. 53**
- **Through a glass darkly: assessing the impact of public engagement**

- Name: **Paul**
 - First Name: **Manners**
 - E-Mail: Paul.Manners@uwe.ac.uk
 - Organisation: **National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement**
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- Authors: **Paul Manners**

- **Abstract:**

- No-one doubts that public engagement generates impact – but how is that impact to be described? As public engagement has become an increasingly important priority for funders of research and higher education in the UK, so the pressure to find ways of accounting for its impact has increased. This workshop will provide delegates with an overview of current developments in the UK. It will explain the new focus on ‘impact’ in the assessment of research excellence, and the opportunity this creates for researchers to articulate the value that engaging with the public brings to the research. It will explain the emerging assessment framework, and current thinking about how best to describe the value of engagement. In parallel, there is increasing scrutiny of the wider benefits that universities generate, and pressure to make the case for their value to society. The NCCPE have recently published a review of the literature in this area, which describes the various methodologies which have been used in higher education and other sectors to pin down the slippery concept of ‘social value’. A summary of the findings and conclusions of this report will be given, followed by discussion.