

ESRC Festival of Social Science 2014 Evaluation



ESRC Festival of Social Science 2014 Evaluation – Summary

The aim of this internally produced evaluation of the 2014 Festival is to measure its success against set aims and objectives and to inform the 2015 Festival.

Background

The ESRC Festival of Social Science is an annual week-long series of events held across the UK. Each year the ESRC welcomes applications to hold events from our funded investments, external researchers and other external organisations, such as third sector and the government departments with an interest in communicating the social sciences.

Events take a variety of formats, including debates, lectures, seminars, exhibitions, film screenings, theatrical performances and hands-on events. They are aimed at a variety of audiences including the general public, young people, policymakers, business and third sector organisations.

The 2014 Festival was held from 1-8 November 2014.

Evaluation aims

The evaluation of the Festival was undertaken to measure its success against its current aims:

- To use the Festival as a platform to raise awareness amongst the general public and businesses/policymakers about social science via:
 - Equipping professionals to disseminate information
 - Using activities as regional PR platforms
- To continue to reduce the cost of running the Festival.

The aim was to also evaluate its success in terms of value for money, quality and effectiveness via its detailed objectives (Annex 1). The evaluation outcomes will be used to inform the 2015 Festival.

The evaluation was conducted using data from the feedback forms completed by event organisers and attendees (Annex 2, 3 and 4), along with statistics such as web traffic, social media activity (tweets), media coverage and qualitative feedback.

Key findings

Reach

- The 2014 Festival had 230 events, an increase from 2013 (184 events)
- 15,119,243 people reached via marketing, promotion and attending events
- At least 20,600 people attended the Festival
- Events were held cross seven regions and 47 UK towns and cities, 89% of events were held outside of London

- Events targeted at a variety of audiences, including business, policymakers, the third sector, general public and young people:
 - 67 events targeted professionals as part of their work/ an audience with a specific interest or some knowledge of the topic
 - 114 targeted at a general audience
 - 48 targeted at young people

Outcomes

- 78% of attendees planned to seek out further information on the topic of the event
- 79% would use the information from the event in their own work/studies
- 73% of young people feel inspired to learn more about the topic of the event
- 38% of the audience were aware that the event was part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science
- 63% of the audience were new to the ESRC and the work of social science
- 98% of event organisers were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with their event overall, developing their skills, and encouraging them to engage with non-academic audiences
- 82% of event organisers were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with the overall range and quality of support of services provided by the ESRC

Recommendations for 2015

- Maintain an even geographical spread of events outside of London
- Continue to monitor audience demographic data
- Work with event organisers to ensure effective promotion of the ESRC and the Festival
- Encourage event organisers to ensure the relevance of event subject and content to the target audience
- Improve the Festival flyer/programme to include more information on all events including those run by block funded partners and ensure it is sent out as soon as available and not with main despatch
- Revise evaluation forms to collect more relevant information and improve the completion rate by organisers and attendees
- Gather metrics on the number of social scientists involved in the events
- Broaden the geographical spread of events via additional partnerships – particularly in North West, South East England and Wales
- Continue to work closely with existing and new partners to share best practice and ideas for improvements
- Provide a modified version of the details and materials form to partnerships to ensure accurate event details online and in the Festival flyer/programme
- Continue to exploit new technologies and options for promotion and coverage – Vines, Blogs etc including improving the effectiveness of Twitter
- Market ESRC and the Festival more effectively to the public and new audiences

ESRC Festival of Social Science 2014 Evaluation - Full Report

The aim of this internally produced evaluation of the 2014 Festival is to measure its success against its aims and objectives and to inform the 2015 Festival.

The evaluation looks at:

- festival programme and audience
- audience - outcomes
- event organiser - outcomes
- partnerships
- marketing and promotion.

Background

The ESRC Festival of Social Science is an annual week-long series of events held across the UK. Each year the ESRC welcomes applications to hold events from our funded investments, external researchers and other external organisations, such as third sector and the government with an interest in communicating the social sciences.

Events take a variety of formats, including debates, lectures, seminars, exhibitions, film screenings, theatrical performances and hands-on events. They are aimed at a variety of audiences including the general public, young people, policymakers, business and third sector organisations.

The 2014 Festival was held from 1-8 November 2014.

Evaluation aims

Evaluation of the Festival was undertaken to measure its success against its current aims:

- Use the Festival as a platform to raise awareness amongst the general public (60%) and businesses/policymakers (40%) about social science via:
 - Equipping professionals to disseminate information
 - Using activities as regional PR platforms
- Continue to reduce the cost of running the Festival.

The aim was to also evaluate its success in terms of value for money, quality and effectiveness via its detailed objectives (Annex 1). The evaluation will be used to inform the 2015 Festival.

The evaluation was conducted using data from the feedback forms completed by event organisers and attendees (Annex 2, 3 and 4), along with statistics such as web traffic, social media tweets, media coverage and qualitative feedback.

Festival Programme and Audience

Programme

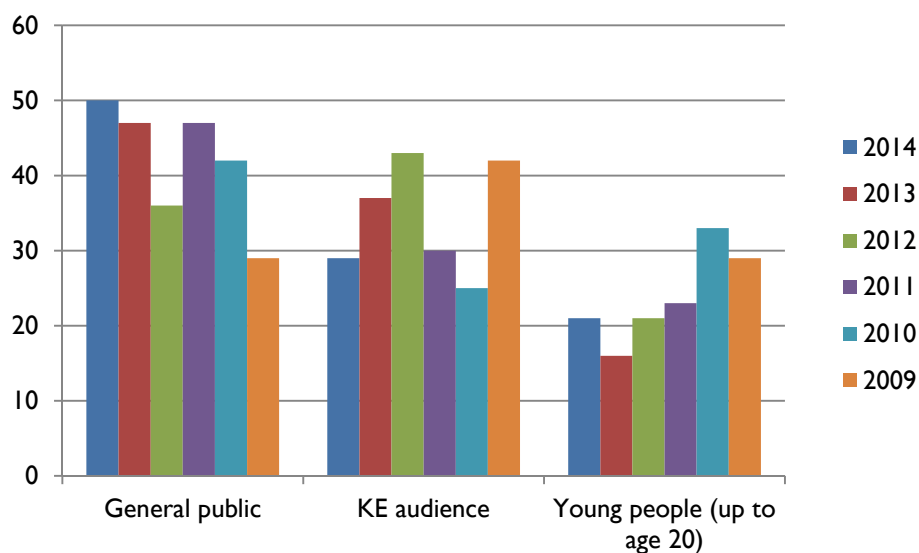
The 2014 Festival achieved a programme of 230 events across seven regions and 47 UK towns and cities, which attracted over 20,000 people. This is a significant increase (25%) from the 184 events and 18,000 people in 2013 (11% increase in attendance). The majority of activities, 89% were held outside of London with events being held in various regions across the UK:

- 31 events were held in Scotland and Northern Ireland (13%)
- 52 in the North East and Yorkshire (23%)
- 15 in the North West (7%)
- 34 in the Midlands (15%)
- 59 in the South West and Wales (26%)
- 13 in the East and South East (6%)
- 26 in London (11%)

As shown in Figure 1, the 2014 Festival events consisted of:

- 67 events targeted at a knowledge exchange (KE) (business, third sector, government) audience (29%)
- 114 targeted at a general audience (50%)
- 48 targeted at young people (21%)

Figure 1: Festival events by audience type (%)



Seventy one per cent of events were targeted at the public and young people. Just under a third of Festival events targeted a professional and specific interest audience and 51% of people attended the Festival in a professional capacity.

The Festival had a variety of events with 44% consisting of arts/theatre, hands-on or exhibitions, multi-activities or taking place online. Events consisted of:

- 5% arts/theatre
- 12% hands-on or exhibitions
- 31% multi-activity
- 11% conference and seminar
- 29% discussions and debate
- 12% were other forms not listed above.

ESRC corporate event

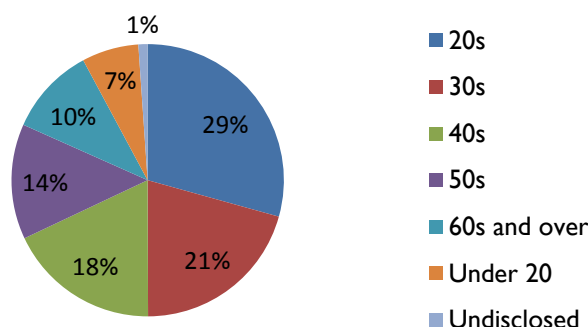
Each year the ESRC hosts a corporate launch event for the Festival, for 2014 the flagship Festival event was held in collaboration with the ESRC funded Centre for Population Change (CPC) at the OXO Gallery in London. The event was an interactive exhibition resulting from CPC research and featuring images from the ESRC photographic competition – ‘Where do I belong?’ on the subject of ‘How to get to 100 and enjoy it’. The event had over 100 attendees with a mixture of policy, business and academics in attendance. The exhibition remained in London for over a week and was also shown at Southampton, Cardiff, Manchester, Birmingham and Glasgow and also appeared on BBC One Breakfast.

Audience profile - over 20

The audience profile is based on the return of the audience questionnaire. In total 2,726 feedback questionnaires were completed, a 14% return rate and comparable to recent years. Of the questionnaires completed 2,118 were from those aged over 20 and 608 were young people.

Sixty-eight per cent of attendees were aged between 20 and 40. Those under 20 had the lowest representation of attendees with just 7%, although this was a 4% increase on 2013. There was a decrease in the representation of attendees aged 60 and over, with 10% attending this year (16% in 2013).

Figure 2: Festival attendess by age group (n=2118)



Sixty per cent of attendees were female and 35% were male compared to the 2013 Festival when 62% of respondents were female and 38% male.

The Festival continues to reach a broad audience across the UK. The majority of attendees were White British/Other.

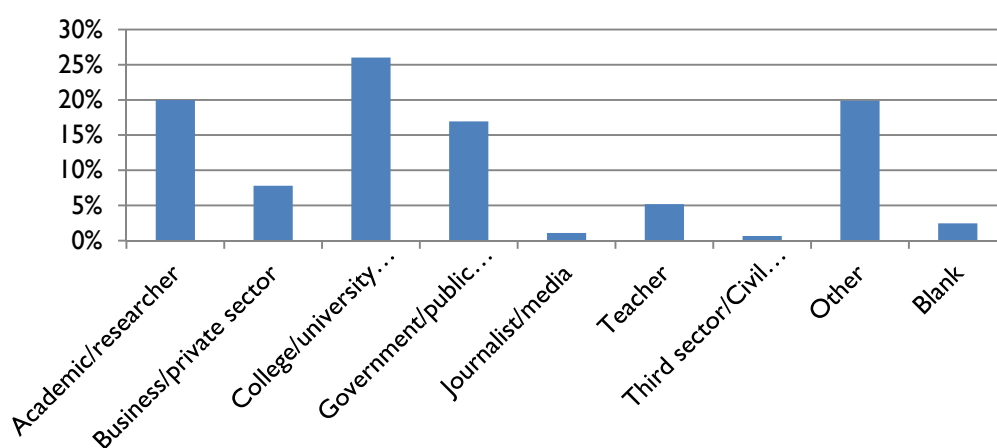
	Festival in 2014	ONS Figures
White British/Other	77% (2013 – 84%)	86%
Asian/Asian British	7% (2013 – 4%)	7.5%
Black/Black British	5% (2013 – 4%)	3%
Mixed	4% (2013 – 2%)	2%
Chinese	3% (2013 – 2%)	1%

This broadly matches the profile of the UK as they are similar to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures for the UK as a whole: White British and mixed account for 86% of the UK population, Asian 7.5%, Black/Black British 3%, mixed and multiple ethnic groups 2%, and other ethnic groups 1%.

The highest representation by occupation was seen in the college/university student which increased from 18% in 2013 to 26% this year. Seventeen per cent attended from government/public sector (up from 16% in 2013) and 8% were from business/private sector (down from 10% in 2013). Consistent with previous years, journalist and media had the lowest representation with 1% (also 1% in 2013).

Of the 28% who chose the other category, just over 16% were retired representing a decrease compared with 2013, when just over a quarter were retired. Which may correlate with the 6% decrease in attendees aged 60 and over, as highlighted in the *Profile of Attendees* section.

Figure 3: Attendees by occupation (n=2118)



Audience profile – young people

There were 48 events aimed at young people, seeing an increase of over 100% compared to 2013. This rise could be due to the increased time organisers had to liaise with schools and that Festival week fell outside of the half-term holidays in 2014.

Fifty-six per cent of the young attendees were female showing a return to levels similar to the 55% in 2013. The number of attendees who were under 16, increased this year to 38%, compared to 33% in 2013. Whilst the number of attendees aged 16-17 dropped to 38% from 51% in 2013.

Figure 4a: Young attendees by age group (n=608)

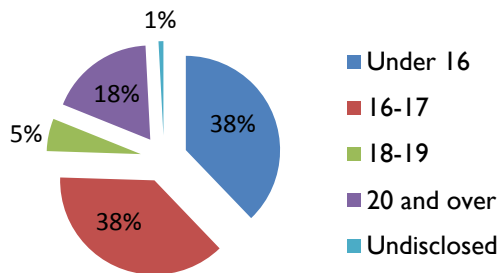
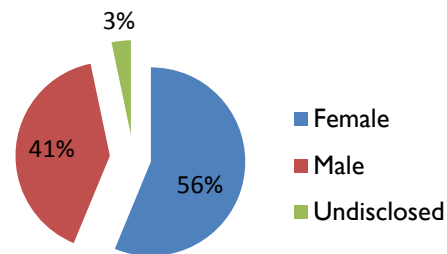
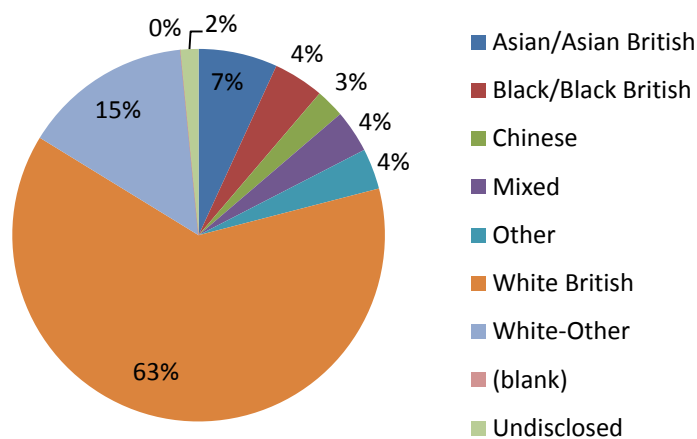


Figure 4b: Young attendees by gender (n=608)



Feedback suggests that the Festival has also reached an ethnically diverse audience with 37% of attendees declaring themselves of an ethnicity other than White British. Asian/Asian British attendees accounted for 7%, showing a slight decrease on the 10.5% in 2013. Black/Black British attendees accounted for 4% remaining at the same level as in 2013. The ethnic groups with the lowest representation among young people were Chinese, Mixed and Other groups.

Figure 5: Audience by ethnicity (n=2118)



Summary

The Festival met two of its festival programme and audience objectives and exceeded in another three as follows:

- Sustain audience attendance of 20,000 **met (20,625)**
- Achieve a programme of at least 180 varied individual activities **exceeded (230)**
- Host a corporate launch event **met**

- 60% of events target general public and young people (40% public: 20% young people) **partially met** 50% were a general audience and 21% young people
- 40% of events aimed at business, policymakers and the third sector **not met** 29% achieved
- 60% of audience are aged between 20-40 **exceeded** at 68%
- 70% of activities are outside the London area, with an even spread across the UK **exceeded 79% held outside of London.**

The two objectives partially met relate to one of the main aims:

- To use the Festival as a platform to raise awareness amongst the general public (60%) and businesses/policymakers (40%) about social science.

We over achieved on reaching a general public audience and therefore had fewer events aimed at business, policymakers and the third sector.

Recommendations

- Aim for an even geographical spread of events outside of London.

Audience - outcomes

Seventy-nine per cent of respondents said they would use the information from the event in their work or studies (85% in 2013), while 78% would seek out further information about the topic (88% in 2013).

Table 1: Expected actions attendees will take following the event (%)	Yes/possibly	No	Undisclosed	N=
Use information from the event in my own work/studies	79	12	9	2118
Pass information from event to colleagues	74	13	13	2118
Make further contact with people I met at the event	62	21	17	2118
Seek out further information	78	10	12	2118

Continuing the trend from previous years, an overwhelming majority (86%) agreed that the event increased their knowledge of the topic covered. Festival events continue to raise awareness of the ESRC and its work as 70% agreed with this statement (79% also agreed in 2013).

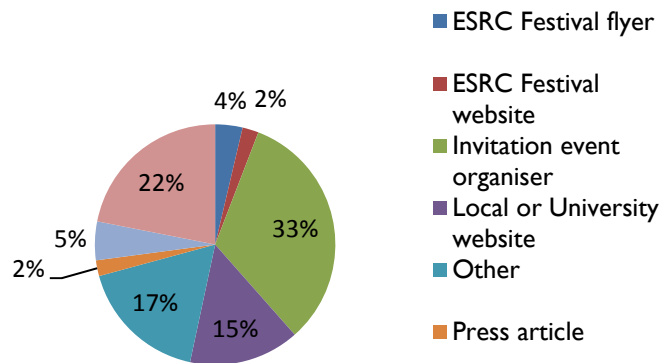
Table 2: Impact of the event (%)	Agree	Disagree	Undisclosed	N=
Raised awareness of the social sciences in general	68	19	13	1843
Raised awareness of the ESRC and its work	70	17	13	1851
Raised awareness of the benefits social science brings to society	71	15	15	1804
Increased my knowledge of the topic covered by this event	86	5	9	1917
More interested in social science now than I was	57	26	17	1754

before

Over half of respondents (55%) said that they would definitely attend another ESRC Festival event maintaining the same level as in 2013. Only one per cent of respondents said they would not attend another event, remaining the same as levels in 2013.

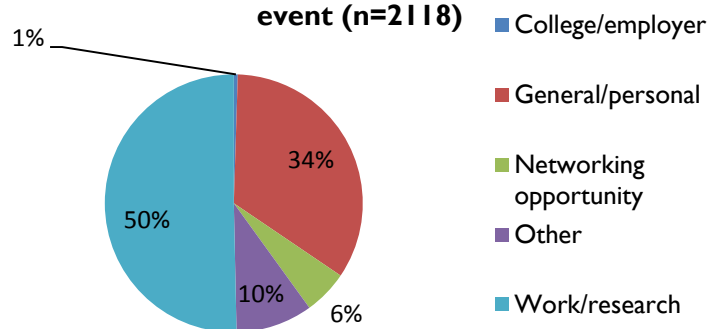
Attendee feedback reinforces our existing understanding that event organiser promotion of the events is vital to their success. *Invitation* was the most common way for attendees to find out about an event, with 33% of respondents reporting this method. *Word of mouth* and *Other* (uncategorised methods) were reported by 22% and 17% of respondents respectively. *Social media* was reported by five per cent of respondents, perhaps highlighting the increased use of the #esrcfestival hash tag on Twitter by both the ESRC and event organisers.

Figure 6: Ways in which attendees first heard about the event attended (n=2118)



The largest proportion of respondents attended events for their work or research returning to the 50% of 2012 after a slight fall to 47% in 2013. These results suggest that attendees recognise the relevance of social science to their work, supported by the findings in Table 1, in which 79% of attendees would use the knowledge they have gained as part of their work or studies.

Figure 7: Primary reason for attending event (n=2118)



When asked how knowledgeable they were about *the ESRC and its work*, 33% of respondents felt that they were ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ aware before attending the event. This was down slightly on the 38% in 2013. The number of respondents who reported being ‘not at all’ aware of the ESRC and its work remained similar to recent years at 35% in 2014, having fluctuated between 32% and 36%.

Table 3: Knowledge of topics prior to event attended (row %)	Very	Fairly	Not Very	Not at all	N=
The ESRC and its work	11	22	28	35	2010
Social science research in general and the contribution it makes to society	24	40	20	9	1959
The topic that formed the focus of this event	23	44	19	6	1970

Thirty-eight per cent of respondents were aware that the event was part of the Festival. When asked if they had attended a Festival of Social Science event in previous years, 13% responded positively and similar to 2013. In comparison with the 5% in 2013, there was an increase in the number of attendees who had already attended another event in the week to 8%. A further 19% of respondents had intentions to attend another event in the week.

Table 4: Attendees’ knowledge of the Festival prior to the event (row %)	Yes	No	N
Aware beforehand that this event was part of the 2013 ESRC Festival of Social Science	38	56	1985
Already attended another ESRC Festival of Social Science Event this week	8	84	1945
Intend to go to any other ESRC Festival of Social Science events this week	19	71	1901
Attended an ESRC Festival (or Social Science Week) event in previous years	13	79	1938

The overwhelming majority (95%) of respondents found the event ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ interesting. While 92% found the content accessible, enjoyable and educational. Less than 1% of respondents reported that they found the event ‘not at all’ interesting, enjoyable, educational or accessible maintaining the same level as last year.

Table 5: Content of event ratings (row %)	Very	Fairly	Not very	Not at all	N
Interesting	77	18	0	0	2018
Enjoyable	64	28	2	0	1980
Educational	69	23	2	0	1989
Relevant to your learning needs	51	31	8	3	1942
Accessible/understandable	66	26	2	0	1985

When asked to rate various aspects of the event they attended, attendees responded positively, with the overwhelming majority of 90%, saying they were very or fairly satisfied with the event overall. Full details are shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Event satisfaction ratings (row %)	Very	Fairly	Not very	Not at all	N
Registration/booking process	72	16	2	0	1911
Structure/format of the event	66	25	1	0	1962
Quality of presentations/content of the event	70	21	1	0	1949
Quality of the presenters/speakers	73	18	1	0	1944
Time given for discussion/questions/debate	62	25	3	0	1918
Venue and facilities	69	20	2	0	1951
The event overall	71	19	1	1	1925

Attendees were also asked to identify which *hand-out materials* were provided to attendees at the event. Nearly half (44%) attendees reported receiving ESRC magazines and publications.

Attendees were offered the opportunity to make comments and suggestions about the events they attended as well as the Festival in general, including how they might be improved in the future. A quarter (24%) of respondents left a comment or suggestion. Many of these related to the content of the event and follow up activities, whilst others related to timing, organisation and promotion. Overwhelmingly, the comments were expressing thanks or praising the event.

Many attendees took the opportunity to give praise or express their appreciation for the event. This feedback included:

“A brilliant event! Great to have a balance of community focus with some academic analysis and thoughts.”

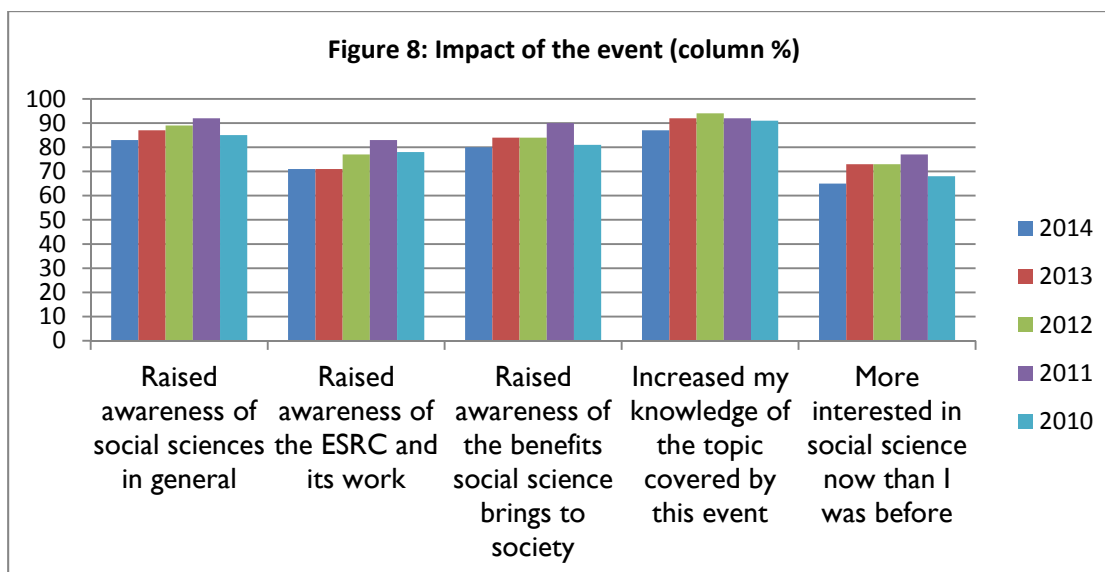
“Excellent event thanks choice of speakers worked well to encourage conscious[ness] rather than conflict around feminism.”

“Great event, simple, informative - dare I say verging on the entertaining! I do work with this client group. I look forward to my "clients" reactions to this work when it "tours" the service providers in the city.”

Young attendees

Eighty seven per cent agreed that the event raised their awareness of the social sciences in general, whilst 84% agreed that it had increased their awareness of the benefits social science brings to society.

As seen in Figure 8, the impact of the festival has been fairly consistent since 2010.



The young attendees were asked about the actions they planned to take after the event. As Table 7 below shows, the percentage of attendees who would, ‘use the information from the event’, fell to 71% against the 80% of 2013. Those who would, seek to ‘learn more about the event topic’, also fell from 82% in 2013 to 73% in 2014. There was a continued decrease in the number, ‘intending to share the information they had learned with family and friends from 78% in 2013 to 74% in 2014.

	Yes/possibly	No	N/A	N=
Use information from event in current course	71	23	7	608
Share information from event with family and friends	74	20	6	608
Learn more about the event topic	73	19	8	608

Twenty-one per cent were ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ knowledgeable about the ESRC and its work before the event, similar to previous years this suggests that event organisers are continuing to reach new audiences with their events, as opposed to working with the same groups or schools with established connections over a period of years. There was slight decrease from 2013 in the number of attendees who felt that they were already ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ knowledgeable about *social science research and the contribution it makes to society* at 49%, 52% of respondents said they were ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ knowledgeable about *the topic that formed the focus of this event* prior to attending. The results suggest that event organisers are attracting new audiences or young people in non-social science disciplines, and are raising awareness of new topics and what social science research can offer.

Table 8: Knowledge of the topics prior to the event attended (row %)	Very	Fairly	Not Very	Not at all	N/A	N=
The ESRC and its work	6	15	19	58	2	608
Social science research in general and the contribution it makes to society	11	38	32	16	4	608
The topic that formed the focus of this event	12	40	33	12	3	608

When asked to rate the content of the event, the respondents reported positively against all five criteria. (see Table 9).

Table 9: Content of event (row %)	Very	Fairly	Not very	Not at all	N/A	N=
Interesting	50	41	5	2	2	608
Enjoyable	42	46	8	2	2	608
Educational	61	29	7	1	1	608
Relevant to your learning needs	33	41	19	5	2	608
Accessible/understandable	49	42	6	2	1	608

Encouragingly, 90% of respondents said that they were either ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ satisfied with the event overall (see Table 10). Eighty five per cent of young people reported that they were ‘very or ‘fairly’ satisfied with the time set aside for discussion, this is slightly lower than the 87% in 2013, which suggests that event organisers still need to be encouraged to build time for this into their events.

Table 10: Event satisfaction (row %)	Very	Fairly	Not very	Not at all	N/A	N=
Structure/format of the event	44	47	6	1	2	608
Quality of the presentations/content of the event	54	38	4	1	3	608
Quality of the presenters/speakers	63	31	2	1	3	608
Time given for discussion/questions/debate	49	36	8	2	4	608
The event overall	52	38	4	1	5	608

Of the 608 respondents, 214 young people offered additional comments and suggestions about how the Festival could be improved. Many of the comments focused on the content and structure of the event, as well as interactions, activities and participation. Feedback received included:

“The presentation was really good, but probably more time spent on the artefacts.”

“The eye tracker music work was brill.”

“More time to learn about the information itself and time to discuss it.”

“Really interesting! Loved everything about it!”

“Maybe it could last longer”.

Summary

The Festival met two of its audience outcome objectives, exceeded in one and narrowly missed two as follows:

- 75% of audience will intend to use the knowledge in their work, education or life **met** 79%
- 80% of young people feel that they learnt something new and feel they will be able to use it in their studies or work **not met** 71%
- 75% of young feel inspired to learn more about the topic of the event **almost met** 73%
- 45% of audience aware that the event was part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science **not met** 38%
- 50% of the audience will be new to the ESRC and the work of social science **exceeded** 63%.

Recommendations

- Continue to monitor audience demographic data.
- Work with event organisers to ensure effective promotion of the ESRC and the Festival of Social Science.
- Encourage event organisers to ensure the relevance of the subject and content to the target audience.

Event organiser - outcomes

One hundred and fifteen event organisers returned feedback questionnaires, which is a 50% return rate. Responses indicate that 27% had prior experience of organising events as part of previous ESRC Festivals and 73% were holding events for the first time. Of the 230 events held over the week, 42% of event organisers indicated they were associated with the ESRC in some way, with 26% being part of an ESRC investment, while 58% were new to the ESRC Festival of Social Science.

Organisers were asked ‘*what were the primary objectives for your event?*’. They were requested to choose not more than three from a list of nine options. The most popular objective was to ‘*increase awareness and understanding of a specific social science subject/topic*’ with 67% of organisers selecting this option.

The second most popular objective was to ‘*communicate information about own organisation*’ with 37% highlighting this, although the number of respondents selecting this option have been in decline over the past five years. There has been a significant increase in organisers wishing to ‘*introduce social science to a new/wider audience*’, up to 33% from 19% in 2013.

There has been a slight increase in the objective to ‘*communicate information about ESRC and its work*’ being seen as a priority this year, with 14% selecting this as opposed to just 10% selecting this option in 2013. The focus of organisers is still clearly on promoting their own work and organisation rather than the role of the ESRC, but there may be greater value placed on showing a connection with the ESRC and its work.

There was a decline in the number of event organisers who aimed to ‘*increase the take-up or application of your research findings*’, at 24% against 30% from the previous year. As with previous years, this lower percentage of choice may be due to events being held by organisers from a variety of backgrounds, including non-research organisations, such as local government and third sector or research administrators. Therefore not all event organisers have their own research to disseminate.

Table 11: Primary objectives of events – up to three chosen (row %)	% Yes	N=	% Yes 2013
Communicate information about ESRC and its work	14	16	10
Communicate information about own organisation	37	43	44
Increase awareness and understanding of Social Science in general	23	26	21
Increase awareness and understanding of specific Social Science subject/topic	67	77	65
Encourage greater participation in Social Science by young people	23	26	22
Introduce Social Science to a new/wider audience	33	38	19
Increase the take-up or application of your research findings	24	28	30
Disseminate the results of your own research	30	34	29
Provide a forum for networking	27	31	25

The ESRC offered various forms of support to event organisers: email notices and communications from the ESRC; telephone and email support; on-line resources; assistance

in sourcing speakers; assistance in marketing and promoting the event. Event organisers were asked if they had used any of these services and to rate how satisfied they were with them (see Table 12 below).

Event organisers were most satisfied with the email notices and communications support they received from the ESRC, with 78% of respondents reporting that they were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with these services.

Table 12: Satisfaction ratings for support services (% of not used, and row % of those who did use the service)	Not used (% of all organisers)	Row% of those who used service				
		Very	Fairly	Not very	Not at all	N=
Email notices/communications from the ESRC	20	56	22	4	1	111
Telephone/email support from the ESRC	43	41	14	5	1	111
On-line resources	27	37	39	8	0	111
Assistance to help you plan and organise your event	46	29	26	8	2	111
Assistance to help you promote and market your event	36	27	29	17	2	111
The overall range of support services provided	18	46	33	13	1	111
The overall quality of support services provided	18	49	33	10	1	111

The ESRC has a responsibility for creating a Festival brand and for helping to promote the Festival and its activities. Presented in Table 13 are the event organisers' satisfaction ratings for the promotion and branding of the Festival. Eighty three per cent of respondents were either 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with the website. There was an increase in those reporting to be 'very' satisfied with the branding materials, 46% up from 42% in 2013. The number of organisers dissatisfied with the regional flyer remained constant at 17%. Comments received suggest this is due to local festival events not being listed individually.

Table 13: Satisfaction with festival promotion (row %)	Not used (% of all organisers)	Row% of those who used service				
		Very	Fairly	Not very	Not at all	N=
Festival website	11	43	40	5	2	111
Festival regional flyer	7	35	41	12	5	111
Branding materials	7	46	37	6	4	111

Comments and suggestions were invited from event organisers about the Festival. Fifty-nine of the 115 respondents offered comments and some expressed their satisfaction with the new opportunity the Festival gave them. Examples of this feedback include:

“I’m happy with the support I received. I now have a better understanding of what is available and will utilise this next time.”

“This was my first ESRC event and I am really encouraged by it.”

“The ESRC are very diligent in following up and amending details quickly. Felt very supported and a seamless run up to the event. Great!”

Organisers had several suggestions for materials provided for events. Many commented that promoting other festival events during festival week may be too late for participants, and general publicity could be sent out sooner to create more of a ‘buzz’ about the festival and enable participants to make plans. There were also recommendations for the flyer to be more informative, as the current format does not allow for a complete listing of times, or details of all of the events held by the local Festivals run by HEI’s.

“The festival flyers were not very useful as they listed all national events with very little detail.”

“I think in practice sixth form students are not very interested in events elsewhere (the flyer), or even in ‘Britain 2014’.”

As with previous years, organisers had different views on the timing of Festival with some offering views that it could occur earlier in the year to prevent there being a low risk of poor weather affecting attendance. Others cited a preference for events outside of term-time, whilst others preferred the opposite. It is clear that no single time of year would suit every potential organiser, but it is important to monitor the effects of the Festival timing.

Organisers were also asked to rate the success of their events in comparison to previous ESRC Festival events they had run (see Tables 14, 15 and 16). Of those who had previously organised an event (27% of respondents), 98% felt that the overall quality of their event was ‘more successful’ or ‘the same’ as previous Festival events which indicates that event organisers have realistic expectations for their events or have learned from previous experience events to boost numbers or audience reaction. Overall, the trend is that events are predominantly achieving the same levels of success as previous years.

	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Less successful	7	12	9	19	16	43
More successful	23	32	44	48	38	45
The same	70	56	47	33	46	12

	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Less successful	2	2	0	0	0	0
More successful	33	40	0	43	49	41
The same	65	58	100	57	51	59

Table 16: Audience reaction %						
	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Less successful	2	4	30	7	5	19
More successful	32	52	0	45	46	32
The same	66	44	70	48	49	49

Overall event organisers responded positively when asked whether they would be interested in holding another event as part of a future Festival with 80% likely to run an event again in the future and the remaining 20% saying they ‘possibly’ would. It is encouraging that a majority have found the experience to be worthwhile and shows that they recognise the value of being part of the Festival.

When asked what they felt the main benefits of taking part in the Festival were, many cited the opportunity to gain experience in public engagement, whilst many others cited the prestige of the Festival and the significance of being part of a UK-wide network of events.

“Experience in public engagement and raising the profile of our research institute through public engagement. Also, an opportunity to present our research to a different audience.”

Summary

The Festival exceeded in all three of its festival event organiser objectives, as follows:

- At least 30% of participating event organisers are associated with ESRC **exceeded 42%**
- At least 40% of events are run by new event organisers **exceeded 58%**
- At least 40% of participating event organisers are not currently funded by the ESRC **exceeded 77%.**

Recommendations

- Improve the Festival flyer/programme to include more information on all events including those run by partner institutions and ensure it is sent out as soon as available and not with the main despatch.
- Revise evaluation forms to collect more relevant information and try and improve the completion rate by organisers and attendees.
- Gather metrics on the number of social scientists involved in planning and delivering Festival events.

Partnerships

The Festival is a 'distributed model' across the UK - the ESRC does not organise, manage or host the activities, rather we facilitate, encourage, enable, and support others to organise activities. As part of this model we are continuing with plans to lower the amount of financial support needed for the Festival whilst continuing to increase both leveraged funding and participation

Building on the success of 2013, the ESRC Festival continues to develop satellite Festival of Social Sciences, via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), with HEIs through the award of a small amount of block grants with the expectation that the same amount is leveraged back into the Festival.

The Festival also enables anyone interested in running an activity to apply; however one of the conditions of activities is that they include a social scientist from a university. This has enabled the ESRC especially to help charities and schools link with academics where they have not been able to do this before, building new relationships.

In 2014 the ESRC increased its partnering with the universities from the three originally piloted to seven. These consisted of the Universities of Bristol, Sheffield, Exeter, Aberdeen, Birmingham, Queen's University Belfast and Sheffield Hallam University. Bristol continued to develop the *Thinking Futures* festival as part of the broader Festival, and again Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam combined to create the *Sheffield Festival of Social Science*, held for the city and surrounding Sheffield area.

The objective was to continue to capitalise and build on the already positive culture of engagement within these universities and maximise the ESRC's return on investment by supporting the universities to source additional funding and in-kind support from their university and partners.

All seven universities were provided with a set amount of money to distribute to local event organisers. Each university was expected to leverage in kind or cash support whilst maintaining the Festival ethos of a broad audience within and outside of their city locations. Attendee and event organiser evaluation forms were used to capture views and have been incorporated into this evaluation, while an additional feedback form was created to evaluate the successes and make improvements to the 'block-funding' partnership model.

This feedback showed that the 'block-funding' model delivers excellent value for money as 106 events were run across the seven institutions, as opposed to approximately 22 that ESRC could have funded centrally. This equates to over four times the number of activities for approximately the same financial outlay. Other benefits included: reaching a wider audience and ensuring institutional support from the outset for all organisers involved. Collectively these institutions were also able to leverage over 300% of additional in-kind and financial support.

Table 17: Partnering with universities	2013	2014
No of partner universities	3	7
Funds provided by ESRC	£20,000	£43,196.00
Average cost per event	£531.55	£407.00
Cash and In-kind support	£113,000	£166,447.00

Summary

The Festival exceeded in both of its objectives as follows:

- Achieve 20% co-funding or in-kind support through partnerships **exceeded** 300%
- Co-brand with at least six other HEI's via MOU agreements **exceeded** seven achieved

Recommendations

- Broaden the geographical spread of events via additional partnerships – particularly in the North West, South East England and Wales.
- Continue to work closely with existing and new partners to share best practice and ideas for improvements.
- Provide a modified version of the details and materials to partnership HEIs to ensure accurate event details online and in the Festival flyer/programme.

Marketing and promotion

There is no paid-for marketing to promote then Festival. We rely on free promotion opportunities, cross-promotion through other ESRC publications/communications materials and, latterly, social media, specifically Twitter, to promote the full programme and events.

Digital

The following analysis covers traffic to the Festival of Social Science website (www.esrcfestival.ac.uk) from 1 January to 7 November 2014. The analysis covers the Festival website exclusively and does not account for traffic statistics for websites developed by event holders to promote their events independently.

The traffic in Figure 10 indicates that traffic peaked around periods of marketing activity, such as the launch of the call for applications in March and the marketing of Festival events online in mid-August. The peak between May and June correlates with event organisers visiting the website to download application forms, view guidance and then the closing deadline for applications in early June. The peak from mid-August was most likely due to event organisers and the general public visiting the site after the programme was launched to view information about the range of events on offer. As expected, the peak in activity was heightened throughout October, in the final days prior to the Festival. This shows that publicity for the Festival was successful in increasing traffic to the site.

Figure 10: Visits to the Festival site between 1 January and 7 November 2014



Figure 11: Visits to the Festival site between 1 and 8 November 2014



The web-analytics data shows that we had 75,288 views of the 992 Festival pages from 1 January to 7 November, and during the week of the Festival there were 7,597 views. The 2014 Festival increased its hits overall on 2013 as there were 56,285 page views in the same period last year. It also increased the number of views over the week from 6,317 in 2013, a

19.4% increase. This could be linked to the change in the flyer format, which returned to listing event names, dates and locations and may have led to more visits to look at a specific event page and further information.

Media

National and regional media

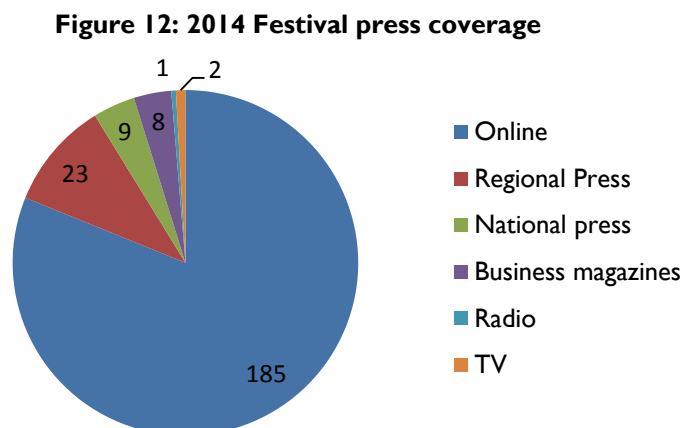
2014 Festival had 228 media references credited to the Festival of Social Science or specific event titles, marking a 33% decrease on 2013 coverage (342 mentions) and below the objective of 300 mentions. However, the equivalent advertising spend to achieve the same audience coverage would have been over £546,000, an 860 per cent increase on 2013. Although some of this increase may be attributed to improvements in recording methods, it still represents a significantly more valuable campaign, with a potential reach of at least 14 million people – 40% higher than in 2013.

In total 9 cuttings were collected from national newspapers (*The Times* (x2), *The Independent* (x2), *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Daily Telegraph* (Scotland), *The Metro*, *The Metro* (Scotland), and *the Daily Express*), covering both broadsheet and tabloid audiences and exceeding the target of two mentions. The audience reach achieved for these national mentions was over 3.3 million people.

Coverage of the Festival amongst regional media remains strong with 23 mentions across print press which included *The Aberdeen Evening Express*, *Cambridge News*, *The Cornishman*, *The Guernsey Press & Stay*, *East Anglian Daily Times*, *The Herald*, *Western Morning News* and *The Yorkshire Post*. The audience reach for these articles was over 400,000 people. International coverage was also achieved at sites including *Descopera.ro* (Romania), *HLN.be* (Belgium) and *Russia Today*, meeting the international objective.

Two television appearances were recorded, on STV and BBC North West Tonight, and one item of radio coverage, on BBC Radio Manchester. This is a significant decrease on previous years (21 broadcast mentions in 2013, 31 in 2012), and an area that should be targeted for improvement. Broadcast coverage is not always automatically picked up by media monitoring services, and broadcast records are largely dependent on event organisers notifying ESRC of their coverage. This media monitoring is being reviewed in early 2015. It is worth noting that, whilst classified as 'online' rather than broadcast coverage, some online articles – such as on Sheffield Live! – also included video content.

Figure 12 below, shows the breakdown of coverage by volume.



Highlights included:

- Print – an article in The Metro profiled the Zombie Science: Genes of the Damned event, but also linked to the entire Festival programme providing dates and the website details. The article opened by defining social science and explaining its importance. An engaging photo drew the eye to the article which achieved a reach of almost one million people.
- Radio – a 14 minute discussion on BBC Radio Manchester looked at media perceptions of poverty, with Dr Kim Allen and Dan Silver providing insight for the host Mike Sweeney, who provided a local angle on the issue. The show focussed on the topic which was discussed at a Festival event in Hulme.
- Online – a news article on the BBC News website revealed how the average age of offenders in Scotland is rising whilst crime levels overall are falling. Professor Susan McVie offered an explanation of why this is the case, and the article concluded by promoting the Festival.
- Specialist – the Mature Times ran two articles across the week, providing an angle on stories of wartime evacuees and school bullying relevant to an older audience. The stories promoted throughout the week helped build relationship with the Mature Times publishing team who are keen to reach the important older demographic.

Feedback from the event organisers based on press releases sent by the ESRC included:

“We had a large media presence at the event – the BBC TV crew, 3 radio journalists and several newspaper reporters.”

“I have just received an enquiry from the Guernsey Press who want to follow up on the ESRC press release.”

“I wish to thank the ESRC for giving us this opportunity to reach out to the general public.”

“Thanks for all your efforts on this press release.”

“Thanks so much for all your help and support, it really was fun being a part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science.”

Social media

In 2014 continued awareness of the Festival was achieved through exploiting new technologies including social media. Over 3,381 tweets were sent using the Twitter hash tag (#esrcfestival) which promoted the Festival and encouraged engagement with it (it is likely there were many Festival-related tweets that didn't contain the hashtag which are not included in these numbers). This equates to a 47% increase against 2013. The vast majority of these tweets were overwhelmingly positive and showed engagement with individual events as well as the overall Festival. Many tweets were also an expression of thanks to ESRC for supporting events and it is also worth noting that this year the number of photographs being uploaded to Festival tweets greatly increased, helping to really bring events to life (especially those based at schools). ESRC joined in Twitter conversations, including live tweeting from daytime and evening events.

The potential reach of the Tweets sent during Festival week was over 1 million Twitter accounts, approximately 250,000 more than in 2013 when the potential reach was 701,000. The ESRC also gained 285 new Twitter followers during the week, this was down on the 377 in 2013, but is still an increase on the 180 averaged per week normally.

Many tweets (including some without the hashtag) can be seen on Storify: <https://storify.com/ESRC/festival-2014-part1> and <https://storify.com/ESRC/festival-2014-part2> although this is not a comprehensive record.

Examples of some tweets sent:

- @lanmsmith15 - Superb public lectures on sustainability by #AlisonAshby & @VictoriaHurth @PlymouthFutures @PlymUniEvents in #esrcfestival ! Thanks everyone
- @MartinJohnston8 - Very positive picture of reducing youth crime in Scotland. #esrcfestival @AQMeNNetwork
- @ImranELSS - Huge thankyou 2 @DrChrisAllen 4 today's #islamophobia event in the mosque in Birmingham. Great discussion. #esrcfestival
- @AiiiHarwood - Thanks @KatyAppletonUEA @Ruth_Welters and @ueaenv for your help valuing nature today - great #esrcfestival event - now excited for Sat!
- @SheffSocScience - #UoSQT #esrcfestival wow what a great debate - thank you @ESRC @SIIDgroup & @sheffjournalism & panellists!
- @mikepsycology - Circles of support focus on the person not the labels - charities could learn from this #esrcfestival #disabilitymmu #MMUPsychology
- @guernseyevacuee - It was a delight to hold our #ww2 event in St Marys Church #Stockport as #Guernsey evacuees worshipped there during the war #esrcfestival
- @Gud2bfree - Great presentation from @ncb_ni_tweets young researchers about their role in research of young people's ICT access at home #esrcfestival

Channel	Reach
Twitter - 3,381 tweets were sent	30,000 direct followers - 1 million reach
eNews	7,000+ subscribers
Press coverage – print and broadcast	14 million
ESRC website	75,288 views
<i>Society Now</i> magazine	16,254 distribution
Total Reach via promotion	15,099,243

Summary

The Festival met three of its objectives, exceeded one and failed one as follows:

- The website receives a 20% increase in hits during the week from 2013 **nearly met** 19.4%
- A supporting programme of national and local media activity including PR, broadcast and social media aims to reach an audience of at least 8 million **exceeded** – 14 million
- Press coverage is achieved across the national and regional media for the week and individual events, with at least 300 mentions in the print media - **not met** 228 mentions but the value of coverage was considerably more than in 2013.
- Coverage is achieved in two national newspapers, twice on TV, and twice on the radio and internationally **met 7 x national print pieces, 2 x TV, radio and international**
- Receive social media coverage, to include 750 twitter mentions, including 100 retweets. **Met increased by 47% combined total.**

Recommendations

- Continue to exploit new technologies and options for promotion and coverage – Vines, Blog etc. including improving the effectiveness of Twitter.
- Market ESRC and the Festival more effectively to the public and new audiences.

Annex I: 2014 Festival Objectives

Programme

- Sustain audience attendance of 20,000
- Achieve a programme of at least 180 varied individual activities
- Host a corporate launch event
- 60% of events target general public and young people (40% public: 20% young people)
- 40% of events aimed at business, policymakers and the third sector
- 60% of audience are aged between 20-40
- 70% of activities are outside the London area, with an even spread across the UK.

Audience - Outcomes

- 75% of audience will intend to use the knowledge in their work, education or life
- 75% of young people have an increased interest in social science following the event and feel inspired to learn more about the topic of the event.
- 45% of audience aware that the event was part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science
- 50% of the audience will be new to the ESRC and the work of social science.

Event organisers - Outcomes

- At least 30% of participating event organisers are from ESRC investments
- At least 40% of events are run by new event organisers
- At least 40% of participating event organisers are not currently funded by the ESRC.

Partnerships

- Achieve 20% co-funding or in-kind support
- Co brand with at least six other HEI's via MOU agreements.

Marketing and Promotion

- The website receives a 20% increase in hits during the week from 2013
- A supporting programme of national and local media activity including PR, broadcast and social media aims to reach an audience of at least 8 million.
- Press coverage is achieved across the national and regional media for the week and individual events, with at least 300 mentions in the print media
- Coverage is achieved in two national newspapers, twice on TV, and twice on the radio and internationally
- Receive social media coverage, to include 750 twitter mentions, including 100 retweets.