

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE NEWS 20

IMPROVING OUR KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE CULTURE

The **KE Concordat (KEC)**, developed by Research England, aims to help universities develop a supportive culture for staff and students engaging in knowledge exchange. Comprising eight guiding principles, it helps universities identify strengths and areas for improvement, and develop action plans to enhance activities.



Following consultation across the institution, the University developed and submitted an action plan in 2021.

York's KEC Action Plan focuses on five key areas where we want to improve our support for and quality of our KE activities. These are as follows:

1. Clearly articulate and communicate our institutional strategic KE priorities.
2. Review and update processes and policies for all KE areas.
3. Develop clear guidance for staff engaging in KE with external stakeholders, partners and customers.
4. Develop a range of departmental/faculty/institutional workload allocation models for KE.
5. Develop best practice for gathering and responding to feedback on the quality of our KE activities (external) or KE support (internal).

Key achievements in the past 18 months have included:

- Clarifying the KE Governance responsibilities of the **University Research Committee (URC)** and the **University Partnerships, Enterprise and Engagement Committee (UPEC)**.
- New Associate Deans for Partnership, Engagement, and International (AD-PEIs) have been appointed, whose portfolios include championing impact and knowledge exchange.
- The establishment of a monthly **Business Engagement Forum** to facilitate collaboration and sharing of best practice.
- A dedicated **Knowledge Exchange webpage** and a **monthly KE newsletter** keep the university community informed about support for KE and raise awareness of new KE activities.
- A **dedicated internal web page** providing information for staff on

how to engage with business and the support available through the **Building Industrial Engagement and Impact** initiative.

- Improvements to our external facing business engagement page **Working with the University of York** and our **Why work with us? video** showcasing the university's expertise and creativity.
- A new internal **Public Engagement with Research webpage** has been launched hosting information on support and funding for PE.
- A systematic approach to the review and updating of policies is taking place.

Read about our achievements for each of the five priorities identified through consultation as part of the development of the KE Strategic Improvement Plan

INTRODUCING THE ADMINISTRATIVE FAIRNESS LAB

Professor Joe Tomlinson, Professor of Public Law at the University of York is Director of The Administrative Fairness Lab, a new research group which emerged organically out of York Law School and through collaborations across disciplines. The Lab’s work addresses the ‘administrative fairness challenge’ in the UK’s public services.

Simply put, the challenge is this. The “frontline” of public services is one of the primary domains of fairness in modern society: it is the primary way the public engages with the government. Each year in the UK, there are billions of interactions around issues such as social security, migration, social care, housing, and education. However, evidence suggests that many people often feel processes in these and other areas treat them unfairly (whatever the immediate outcome of any process). We think this a problem because public services should treat people fairly in principle. We also think the prevalence of perceived negative experiences with public service processes likely significantly affects wider outcomes that we all care about, such as health and wellbeing.

Initially set up by just three people two years ago, the Lab is now an active and diverse community of over 30 researchers based both at York and many other institutions across the UK. Those working on projects in the Lab are drawn from disciplines including law, psychology, political science, computer science, social policy, and many more. We have also recruited an outstanding team of early career researcher, including post-docs and PhDs, who are central to our programme.



Our developing work has been built around diverse partnerships with key central government departments (such as the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Levelling Up), local government bodies in York, national charities (such as the Child Poverty Action Group), and local charities (such as the Welfare Benefits Unit). We have been able to scale up the Lab and our ambitions due to the generous support of funders including the Nuffield Foundation, National Institute for Health and Care Research, the Financial Fairness Trust, the Leverhulme Trust, and the Lloyds Bank Foundation, as well as support provided via the University of York **SPARKS** Award. Their support allows us to tackle the administrative fairness challenge in a wide array of areas, including Universal Credit, GPs’ administrative

systems, council tax enforcement practices and autism assessments.

In the coming months, we will be publishing multiple research papers, including a major new report funded by the Nuffield Foundation setting out a new way of thinking about fair processes relating to Universal Credit. We hope that our research will not just reshape how academics think about these issues in theory, but will provide organisations concerned with these issues with a new pathway for innovation, underpinned by rigorous evidence, that can make a difference at a time when public services are under pressure.

Learn more about the Administrative Fairness Lab and the Team

WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT RESEARCH IMPACT?

We have recently launched a new online learning resource on the fundamentals of research impact. **Research Impact: Creating Meaning and Value** is an online, self-directed course now available to all staff and postgraduate researchers at York.

The course is suitable for researchers and support staff at all career stages, whether you're new to research impact or already have some experience. It features interactive activities and examples from a breadth of research disciplines. The course has been specifically designed so you can dip in and out of the modules whenever it suits you, and there are opportunities to reflect on how it applies to your own work. It contains 5 modules which cover topics including planning for impact, engaging with stakeholders and evidencing impact.

Feedback from users is very positive, with 91% of survey respondents intending to apply what they learned to their work and

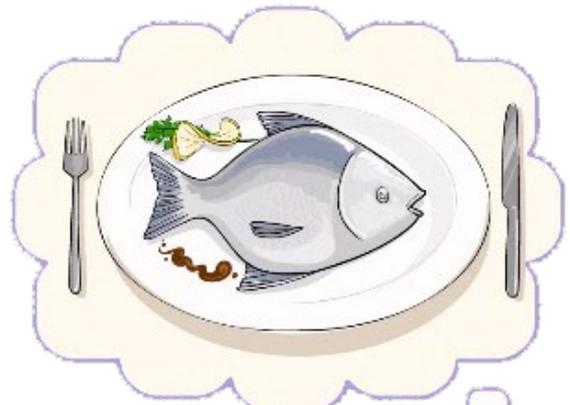
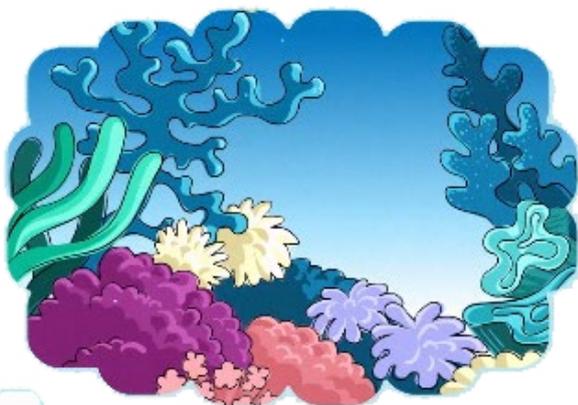
over 87% saying that they would recommend it to a colleague.

Claire Childs, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Language and Linguistic Science, said: "The advice is very practical – not too generic – with good examples. I liked the scenarios where you were asked to think about how you would advise someone on a particular issue."

Anne-Marie Greene, a Professor in the School for Business and Society, said: "The content was clear and easy to follow, which allows the beginner or the more experienced to find their place easily... the modules cover the key areas you'd expect in impact training. I liked the fill-in forms on different aspects that you could save for future reference."

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The course can be accessed by staff via the **Learning Management System (LMS)** and by postgraduate researchers via the **Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)**. For more information on the course or other learning opportunities, contact impact-and-ke-training@york.ac.uk



PERFORMING THE JEWISH ARCHIVE

Prisoners in the Terezín/Theresienstadt Ghetto in the Czech Republic wrote and performed theatrical and musical performances throughout their captivity in the World War II garrison town. Thousands perished in the ghetto and in slave-labour and death camps but a rich archive of theatrical works created in the ghetto remains.

Many of these archives remained unknown until they came to light during **Dr Lisa Peschel's** research, which provided insight into the reasons why the prisoners would bring theatre into such a harsh environment.

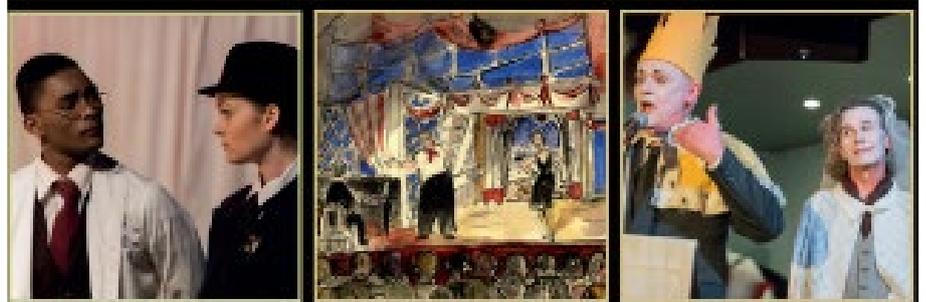
Scripts for cabarets, sketches, historical and verse dramas and puppet plays demonstrate that theatrical performances were seldom used as a form of protest or opposition to the Nazis. Rather, they were a form of self-expression which enabled the prisoners to create and manage their own narratives in a safe space, offering temporary respite from the deprivations around them.

During the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded Performing the Jewish Archive project (2014-17), scripts from the ghetto were performed to audiences around the world at six festivals on four continents. The researchers are now working to ensure that knowledge gained during those projects is conveyed to artists and scholars who might engage in similar projects.

With the edited volume *A Holocaust Cabaret: Re-making Theatre from a Jewish Ghetto*, Dr Lisa Peschel and the production teams in Australia and South Africa describe how they re-imagined and staged one of the performances from Theresienstadt. Drawing on the only materials preserved, the songs, a souvenir poster that listed the characters' names and survivors' memories of a few key moments of the show, they created a plot outline for *Prinz Bettlegend (The Bedridden Prince)*.



A Holocaust Cabaret Re-making Theatre from a Jewish Ghetto



Edited by
Lisa Peschel

Local actors then improvised around that outline to create a fully staged performance. The edited volume, with contributions by members of both artistic teams, serves as a blueprint for other artists wishing to embark on similar projects.

Dr Lisa Peschel's research interests include theories of emotion, trauma, humour, memory and the roles that theatrical performance plays for societies in crisis.

YORK'S SPARKS INITIATIVE – YORVOICE

YorVoice is one of three projects funded by the University of York's SPARKS initiative. The project is led by **Dr Amelia Gully** and **Dr Vincent Hughes** from the Department of Language and Linguistic Science and **Dr Sophie Meekings** from the Department of Psychology. The central aim of YorVoice is to establish York as the world's leading centre for interdisciplinary and impactful research into the human voice, focusing five cross-cutting themes: social justice, technology, health, performance, and education.

YorVoice has three strands:

- **Community:** involving researchers from across the University community building activities include regular

networking and research-sharing activities, as well as training events and support for interdisciplinary projects.

- **Research:** Five research projects have been commissioned to address a real-world issues relevant to the themes of YorVoice including: designing interventions to build singing confidence and improve well-being; establishing regulation for voice AI, particularly for performers; building a breathing app to support speech and language therapy; examining the effects of atypical voices in high-stakes contexts such as police interviews; and creating a documentary to explore the impact of community arts on identity and confidence.



- **Sustainability:** Long-term YorVoice hopes to engage with voice researchers nationally and internationally, and non-academic partners who may contribute to and benefit from our research.

If you are interested in finding out more you can sign-up to our **mailing list** or if you'd like to discuss specific ways you can engage with the project, including research collaboration, please email us at yorvoice-project@york.ac.uk.

AI SUPERCONNECTOR (AISC) PROGRAMME

The AI SuperConnector programme is designed to support and accelerate the commercialisation of AI innovations and develop participants through the spin-out journey, offering substantial resources and support.

We are looking for researchers eager to develop the commercial impact of an AI technology. The time commitment with the project will involve three–six hours per week, and give access to significant benefits, including:

- £20,000 in equity-free funding for prototyping and validation.
- AI-focused masterclasses and networking opportunities with industry leaders, such as Google.
- Tailored support for navigating regulatory challenges, securing IP rights, and more.

- Opportunities to showcase ideas to key stakeholders, including access to sector-specific investors.

Key dates and information about the programme

- Information Session: 15 May, 1 to 2 pm (Online via Zoom) | [Link to calendar invite](#)
- Information Session: 22 May, 1 to 2 pm (Online via Zoom) | [Link to calendar invite](#)
- Application deadline for the first cohort: 9 June, 2024
- Programme start date: Week commencing 15 July, 2024
- More details: [AI SuperConnector Website](#) or email jessica.dobson@york.ac.uk

If you think this programme sounds like a good fit for your colleagues, please circulate!