



Knowledge Exchange Framework KEF3 Public & Community Engagement Narrative Template

**For submission to Research England by
12:00pm (noon) on Wednesday 29 March 2023
Max words: 2,500 - plus 120 word plain English summary**

Submission method


All narrative statements must use the relevant KEF3 template, in MS Word format, and be submitted via the SharePoint link provided to the nominated KEF contact. Further information is provided in the [KEF3 narrative guidance](#).

Public and community engagement

Institution name	Royal College of Music
UKPRN (<i>www.ukrlp.co.uk</i>)	10007778
Total word count (<i>including summary of approach</i>)	2495

This template uses an embedded table to contain all textual and infographic elements of your submission, please do not edit the format of the templates or add additional rows to the tables.

A maximum of 2,500 words and up to ten diagrams or images - across the five aspects - may be included. All images must have alternative text descriptions provided via the MS Word 'alt text' feature. Please refer to the [narrative guidance](#) for detailed information about the permitted formatting.

Aspect score summary	Score	
1 - Strategy	2.5	Please insert the self-assessment score for each aspect. 
2 - Support	2.5	
3 - Activity	5	
4 – Enhancing practice	3	
5 – Building on success	2.5	
TOTAL SCORE	15.5	Insert the summed total score

Summary of approach

Summary

Please provide a short (max 120 words) summary of your approach to community and public engagement. This should be in plain English and provide a succinct and accessible overview of your approach.

Performance is central to our identity as a music conservatoire. Each year a diverse public-facing artistic programme of over 500 events is delivered by our students, staff, and internationally renowned artists. This extensive programme of activities is curated to engage a wide range of different audiences.

An inclusive programme of [community workshops](#) is delivered by our [Learning and Participation](#) ('Sparks') and [Museum](#) teams; students perform in community settings via our [Creative Careers Centre](#), whilst co-designed [public health research](#) engages and benefits local and international communities.

The RCM's refreshed [Strategic Plan](#) places access and inclusivity at the heart of the RCM as the institution extends its reach, and engages with communities and the public in new and expanded ways.

Aspect 1: Strategy

Strategic approach

How have you ensured that the P&CE work of your institution is purposeful, well supported and adequately resourced? What has informed your approach, and how is it governed and led?

This section provides an opportunity for you to articulate:

- your strategic approach to P&CE
- your priorities and goals
- how you have identified relevant public and community groups and their needs at an institutional level
- How you have built considerations of EDI into your approach
- How your approach is distinctive to your institution and the context in which you work

You should present appropriate supporting evidence to support your narrative, for example:

- A logic model or similar, outlining your approach and intended impacts
- A stakeholder map to describe key partnerships and the communities / publics that you have engaged with
- An outline of your governance structure and leadership arrangements for P&CE
- Details of how you have resourced your approach, and sought to ensure value for money

Refer to the supporting [guidance document](#) for examples of evidence you may wish to include to corroborate your self-assessment.

Our strategic approach and goals

The RCM’s public engagement work aligns with the institution’s vision to be a ‘relevant, persuasive and world-leading advocate for the future of music, as an agent for positive and meaningful cultural change’. In our [Research and KE Strategy](#) we seek to maximise ‘the beneficial impact of RCM research for the wider public good’. These strategic priorities are recognised in the RCM’s [Strategic Plan 2017-27](#) which commits to ‘increase our relevance to the local community through a programme of public engagement featuring meaningful projects and partnerships’.

Based on outcomes from the first KEF, in 2021 the RCM signed up for the KEC Concordat and identified the following institutional strategic goals, which align with the broader strategic priorities above:

- Connecting in meaningful and sustainable ways with more diverse audiences and learners
- Developing the College’s role as a vibrant cultural hub that has a positive impact on its local community
- Providing sector-leading employability opportunities for our students
- Maximising the KE potential of our staff community, which includes a high number of industry professionals and internationally-leading researchers.

Institutional level identification of relevant public/ community groups and their needs

This is currently delegated to individual departments (Artistic Planning, Museum, Creative Careers, Sparks, Research), delivering bespoke activities. We recognise that an institutional level set of shared P&CE principles would improve alignment and collective understanding of our strategic goals. In response to KEC feedback, as of summer 2022 the development of an RCM P&CE Strategy is underway.

How our approach is distinctive to the RCM and the context in which we work

Our unique artistic programme of 500+ public-facing music performances and events each year is at the core of our P&CE. This is made possible by the large number of practising performers and composers in our student and staff community, providing our students and the external community with access to and experience of the highest levels of artistic practice. The [Centre for Performance Science](#) (CPS), a collaboration with Imperial College London, is a leading international centre for research in performance health, musical care, and arts and health. This work is especially timely in an era where social prescribing is a rapidly expanding field for improved health and wellbeing.

How we have built considerations of EDI into our approach

The RCM introduced a new [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#) in 2021 to cover all areas of RCM’s work. P&CE initiatives include:

- Introducing a ‘pay what you can’ model for performances (most of which are free)
- EDI informing every stage of [Museum](#) and [Sparks](#)’ P&CE projects, from project proposals to evaluation
- EDI is a key selection criterion in the RCM [Accelerate Start-up Programme](#)
- The [Artistic Strategy](#) committing to presenting more repertoire and artists from underrepresented groups.

We recognise however there are gaps in our EDI processes, such as not currently collecting full data on audience demographics for concerts, and embedding EDI in KE project planning.

Self-assessment score	2.5	←	<i>Insert score between 1 – 5 here Refer to guidance</i>
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Developing your strategy			document for scoring criteria.
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Aspect 2: Support

Practical support for staff and students

What practical support have you put in place to support public and community engagement and recognise the work appropriately? How open and responsive have you been to the needs and interests of your communities, and to the co-creation of knowledge?

You should present appropriate supporting evidence to support your narrative, for example:

- An organogram highlighting the key support roles and internal organisation
- An infographic describing the support infrastructure
- Details of how you have resourced your support for P&CE
- Details of reward and recognition processes (e.g. promotion pathways, staff prizes)
- Mechanisms that are in place to facilitate excellent engagement practice
- Details of how you have taken account of EDI in the practical support you have put in place
- Evidence of the uptake and effectiveness of the key support mechanisms that are in place (or cross reference to Aspect 5, if this information is included there)

Refer to the supporting [guidance document](#) for examples of evidence you may wish to include to corroborate your self-assessment.

Resource and support for P&CE

Directorate members and specific professional services managers are responsible for P&CE, including Performance and Programming, [Sparks](#), the [Museum](#), the [Creative Careers Centre](#) and the [Research & KE Office](#). These areas intersect with learning and teaching, research, artistic programming, EDI, employability training and widening participation.

As a small and specialist institution (SSI), centralised resource for P&CE is limited. Our Research and KE Office is small even for a conservatoire, with a 1.0FTE RKE Manager and a 0.6FTE Research Finance Officer who manage and administer all areas of research/KE.

Mechanisms that are in place to facilitate excellent engagement practice

The KEC Action Plan identified the need for a discrete, informal committee focussing on KE/P&CE. Termly meetings of a new RCM KE Working Group (KEWG) chaired by the Director of Programmes began in March 2022, with representation from across the College. This committee:

1. Provides a forum for College departments engaged in P&CE and KE to share good practice and identify KE potential
2. Is tasked with developing a College-wide P&CE strategy that reflects a set of shared principles and values

3. Monitors and evaluates KE projects with a view to maximising the benefit and impact of College KE activities
4. Promotes EDI with specific reference to the RCM EDI policy and strategy, and reflects regularly on how the work of the Group might support the strategy.

Outstanding P&CE practice is promoted by the RCM's MarComms team, including the termly public-facing '[Upbeat](#)' magazine and web and social media channels, and the 'Music and Ideas' series of free, public research and KE talks.

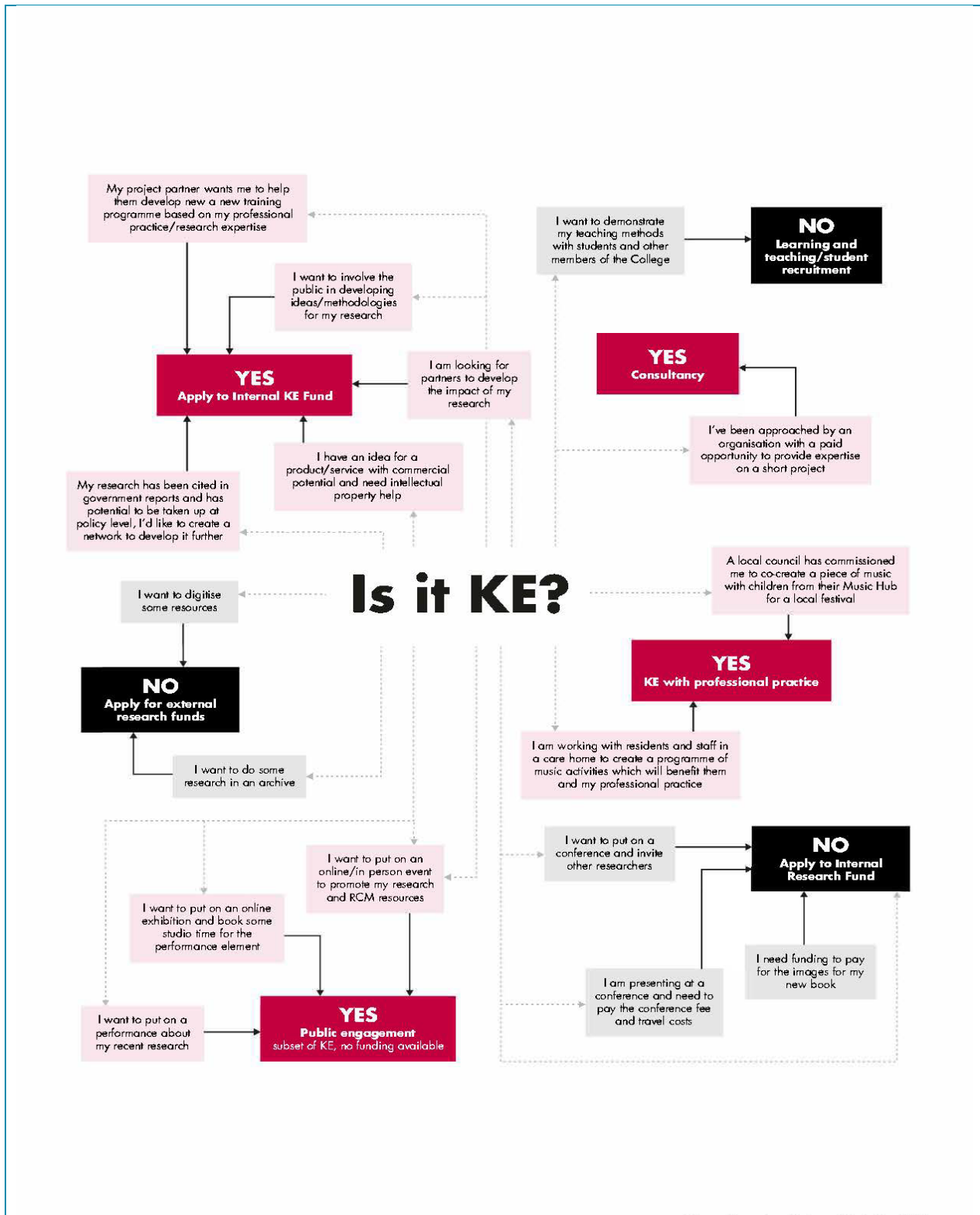
Practical support in place to support and recognise P&CE

Recognition of KE in academic job descriptions was introduced in 2021- there is no promotion track for research-active staff, and the same applies for KE-active staff. However all staff, salaried or hourly-paid, have access to our UKRI internal fund allocations, encouraging co-produced pilot civic engagement projects, partnership development and scoping activities. The funds are managed, administered, and monitored by the R&KE Manager and promoted to staff on Learn, the RCM's intranet, with support for time buy-out, equipment purchases, administrative support, CPD and specialist training.

Responsiveness to the needs and interests of our communities, and the co-creation of knowledge

During Covid (2019-2021) our P&CE was quickly pivoted online, including [YouTube performances](#), [digital exhibitions](#) and Zoom [family learning and participation resources](#) and sessions.

The RKE Manager launched a KE/PCE page in 2022 on the staff intranet to promote understanding of, and opportunities to engage to a highly peripatetic staff base, feeding into externally facing KE web pages in 2022-23. Materials include an 'Is it KE?' infographic:



Practical support for EDI

We have significantly invested in outreach and related activity from the outset and our strategy is for this to continue. Sparks focuses on the needs of children and young people in RCM’s three local boroughs, and is involved in a Community Access programme, including a partnership with [IntoUniversity](https://re.ukri.org/) (IU). We are committed to removing barriers to accessing

classical music. Sparks participants receive financial support from RCM fundraising initiatives like the EDI Matching Fund .			
Self-assessment score Support structures and recognition	2.5	←	<i>Insert score between 1 – 5 here</i> <i>Refer to guidance document for scoring criteria.</i>

Aspect 3: Activity

Delivering public and community engagement activities

What are some of the key programmes of activity that you have undertaken which best illustrate your approach to P&CE and the outcomes you are achieving? How do these relate back to your strategic goals, outlined in Aspect 1?

Higher scoring institutions might be expected to explain the rationale for these activities; who they are targeting; evidence of the outcomes achieved; and how they ensure the activities meet the needs of publics and communities.

Please focus on the last three years of activity. You might want to include examples of both the 'breadth' and 'depth' of your work. We expect that the activities described will be primarily focused on facilitating the exchange and creation of knowledge with publics and communities.

You should present appropriate supporting evidence to support your narrative, for example:

- Reports relating to the featured projects or programmes, including evaluations if available
- Videos, podcasts or other showcasing of activities
- Evidence of the resources allocated and/or of your approach to ensuring 'value for money' from the activities undertaken

NOTE: you will be invited to explain your institutional approach to the evaluation of your P&CE activity in Aspect 4.

Refer to the supporting [guidance document](#) for examples of evidence you may wish to include to corroborate your self-assessment.

Public events: Pre-Covid RCM staff and students created and took part in over 500 annual public facing events, workshops, performances and exhibitions, including themed festivals such as the [Festival of Percussion](#), and the [Exhibition Road Festival](#),



2019 Percussion Festival, courtesy of George Waddell

Students are given performance opportunities in community settings through [the Creative Careers Centre](#) (see Regeneration template).

As evidenced by our HEBCI return which reported zero Box Office income, Covid had a devastating effect on our artistic programme, with no public events held in 2020-21. We responded with an extensive online concert series, seeing more than 90 online events broadcast that year and a 40% increase in online views. Since 2018 our performances on the RCM [YouTube channel](#) have received 3,126,547 views with 532,573 hours of content watched in 115 regions across the globe.

In-person events were re-introduced in 2021-22 and digital activity continues to connect many events with worldwide audiences.

Learning and Participation: RCM Collections inspire the content of all programming to help bridge the gap to learning more about our heritage objects and stories. Responding to Covid the Museum team developed a wide range of [digital learning resources for families and schools](#), including activities tailored to Key Stages 1-4 and SEND learners. A new 'combined' offer with Sparks has led to every Sparks Explorers course for children aged 8-12 being inspired by an object or person from the RCM collections. The Museum Outreach team restarted its schools programme after reopening in October 2021. Sessions developed as part of the Lottery funded Teacher Ambassador Programme maximised the collections' teaching potential, making make close connections with the National Curriculum. Currently demand for school visits is outstripping our capacity.



Image courtesy of RCM Museum

Families are a target audience for widening participation. Relaxed Sunday performances for SEND children have sold out. New 'drop-in' models of family engagement are being included in RCM and wider local festivals. In 2022 the two day Great Exhibition Road Festival engaged with over 1000 people. The Museum also established its regular families holiday programme; Mini Music Makers for children from 2-5 years old and the Museum Family Concert (or Workshop) for children aged 7-12:



Image courtesy of RCM Sparks

The Sparks Juniors enhanced bursary programme is available to children from under-represented backgrounds on their journey through to the RCM Junior Department and the Tri-borough Music Hub. The Get, Set, Play free family programme targets groups in lower socio-economic areas of the Tri-borough in local community settings.

The programme pivoted online to Zoom during Covid, including delivering home musical instrument packs to families. A similar pivot online occurred with the Sparks Schools partner programme, which offers a practical response to the decline of music in state schools by raising music engagement in local secondary schools with higher-than-average free school meals/pupil premium data. The infographic below illustrates the reach of Sparks activity 2021-22:



Engaging the public with music research:

The Centre for Performance Science specialises in participatory, large scale public health projects which are co-designed with practitioners and end-users in community settings. The international [Arts in the City](#) project (April 2022- March 2024) is exploring how the social-cultural urban infrastructure in two cities of South America: Salvador (Brazil) and Cochabamba

(Bolivia) impacts on its citizens' health and wellbeing by investigating levels of social connectedness, loneliness and inclusion within large cities.



Arts in the City Image courtesy of Wikimedia

In December 2020 [HEartS Professional](#), a new strand of the AHRC funded [HEartS](#) project (2018-2021) surveyed 385 arts professionals in the UK, USA, Canada and Australia about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on their industry, providing first-hand insights. Outputs include the May 2022 article [‘The future of the cultural workforce: Perspectives from early career arts professionals on the challenges and future of the cultural industries in the context of COVID-19’](#) which noted the pandemic’s impact of the permanent closing of live venues, many creative professionals permanently shifting into other work, and the unforeseen advantages of online creative production with wider audience reach.

<p>Self-assessment score Delivering your strategy</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>←</p>	<p><i>Insert score between 1 – 5 here</i></p> <p><i>Refer to guidance document for scoring criteria.</i></p>
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Aspect 4: Enhancing practice

Enhancing the quality of your P&CE practice

You have already described some of your key programmes of activity in Aspect 3. You were also invited to provide evidence of the outcomes of these activities.

The focus in this Aspect is on how you have organised and supported evaluation of your P&CE activity, to improve the experience of publics and communities and to help staff and students to develop their practical expertise.

Have you chosen to develop an institution-wide approach to monitoring and evaluating the quality of your engagement activities? Have you provided support to individuals and teams to help them with evaluation? Have you provided tools and approaches to encourage staff and students to reflect on their practice, and training and support for staff to apply these?

How do you collect and share the evidence you gather to improve the experience of publics and communities, and to help you develop better and more effective engagement activity?

You should present appropriate supporting evidence to support your narrative, for example:

- Details of resources that have been invested to support evaluation and reflection on practice (including specialist support)
- Details of outcome frameworks/KPIs against which you have evaluated the work, and how these relate back to strategic goals (Aspect 1).

Refer to the supporting [guidance document](#) for examples of evidence you may wish to include to corroborate your self-assessment.

Institution-wide approach to monitoring and evaluating the quality of engagement activities

To date departments have adopted their own approaches to monitoring outcomes. Annual reports for Learning and Participation (Sparks), The Creative Careers Centre, Research and KE and the Museum are reviewed by RCM Senate and Council. All projects supported by the internal KE fund require an evaluation report to be submitted to the RKE Office at the end of the funded period.

We are now developing a more unified, institution-wide approach to monitoring and evaluating our P&CE, however staffing capacity (1.6FTE RKE staff responsible for College-wide KE development) remains a challenge for implementation.

Collecting and sharing evidence

The R&KE Manager has started a stakeholder engagement mapping exercise to inform the new P&CE Strategy. Drawing upon current projects, a series of three short KE/PCE films for internal and external audiences was commissioned by the RKE Manager from Tantrum Media. Draft edits of the films can be viewed at: [Draft KE film edits June 2022](#)

The KE Working Group has identified Sparks and the Museum as areas of best practice in project evaluation and is encouraging peer sharing to upskill other departments. For example, Sparks developed a benchmarking and monitoring process during Covid to evaluate the musical and social development of programme participants. Participant information is collected at the beginning of a programme, with structured mid-point reflection with leaders and/or participants and end-point data collection. The Sparks team also seek information on participants' destinations after projects, maintaining close communication with partner organisations to support long-term progression.

The Museum regularly collects visitor data and conducts annual surveys to inform its public programme. The 2022 visitor survey (254 respondents, 73% of whom were first time visitors)

showed that 98.4% of visitors to the Museum rated their enjoyment as 4 or 5 (out of 5); 85% of visitors saying they would return, and 95% would recommend it to others. The detailed findings on visitor feedback and demographics inform Museum decisions on temporary exhibition curation, marketing, social media, and approaches to visitor experience. Data from MarComms campaigns is also fed back; survey data informed MarComms' post Covid 'Music and More' re-opening campaign, which increased physical Museum visits up by 34% and gross ticket income up 4% compared to the previous 3 months.

Audience attendance data for public events is submitted to [The Audience Agency](#) by the MarComms team after each season to benchmark against other organisations. Specific research commissioned from the Audience Agency in 2021 to understand post-pandemic audience behaviours informed our decisions to introduce a 'Pay What You Can' approach to ticket prices and to retain a blended programme of in-person and digital performances. Feedback to the Artistic Programming Committee ensures future events are planned to attract and retain the widest possible audience base.

<p>Self-assessment score Evidencing success</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>←</p>	<p><i>Insert score between 1 – 5 here</i></p> <p><i>Refer to guidance document for scoring criteria.</i></p>
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Aspect 5: Building on success

Supporting a culture of continuous improvement

Looking back over the last three years, how effectively have you realised your strategic goals and ambitions for Public and Community Engagement (outlined in Aspect 1)? Have you evaluated the effectiveness of the support you offer (outlined in Aspect 2)?

How have you gone about monitoring and sharing your progress – for instance, how and to whom do you report on your progress, inside and outside your institution? How have you involved your communities in this scrutiny of your strategic approach?

How have you used this learning about 'what is working' (and what isn't) to inform and improve your strategic approach and the support you offer to staff, students and communities?

You should present appropriate supporting evidence to support your narrative, for example:

- Infographic to describe the key governance and accountability mechanisms that are in place to monitor your strategic goals (linking back to Aspect 1)

- Details of how your strategic approach and support infrastructure were monitored/evaluated and how this evidence was used to improve your support (linking back to Aspect 2)
- Details of how you have involved publics and communities in the oversight and steering of your work
- Details of how you have used the findings from your evaluation of activities to improve your work, and build awareness of it (linking back to Aspects 3 and 4)?
- Examples of internal and external reporting of performance

Refer to the supporting guidance document for examples of evidence you may wish to include to corroborate your self-assessment.

The RCM demonstrated remarkable digital agility during the pandemic, but this disruptive period (2019-2021) severely limited in-person engagement through concerts, facilities, and outreach. Audience Agency figures report that in-person attendance at RCM performances and events in 2021-22 were still below pre-pandemic levels (-36% for Spring and -20% for Summer compared to 2019). As a result, audience development (acquisition and retention) will be prioritised over the next year.

Departments currently set their own goals and report annually on outcomes through annual reports to RCM Senate and Council and interim presentations to RCM Senate Executive, the main operational committee. The KEC was a vital point of reflection and has provided a roadmap for KE enhancement at RCM. Priorities are now to complete the mapping of existing activity and implement a new PE Strategy that sets out shared strategic aims across the College. As of 2021-22, work is underway to raise awareness of existing PC&E activity through films, the staff intranet, guidance documents, social media, internal newsletters, and staff training.

The Museum and Sparks demonstrate developed approaches to evaluation and enhancement, including co-creation with audiences and partners. Sparks maintains close relationships with the Tri-Borough Music Hub (through representation on the TBMH steering group), and community music organisations including [Nucleo](#), [Music Masters](#), and the [London Music Fund](#). These partnerships inform Sparks' programme design at all levels.

Over the last two years the Sparks Juniors programme has drawn upon external consultancy by [Sound Connections](#) to develop improved monitoring and evaluation procedures. A new framework has been introduced to collect parent/pupil, teacher, and wider stakeholders' feedback that informs programme enhancement for improved student outcomes.

The RCM Museum's annual visitor surveys, initiated during 2022, aid understanding of current and potential audiences and planning. Evaluation during the Museum's closure included collating desk research on the local catchment area using [Audience Finder](#), reviewing research commissioned by the RBK&C including the borough's [Visitor and Arts and Cultural Policies](#) and data drawn from [London & Partners](#) (Mayor of London) promoting London as a destination.

<p>Self-assessment score</p> <p>Communicating and acting on the results</p>	<p>2.5</p>	<p>←</p>	<p><i>Insert score between 1 – 5 here</i></p> <p><i>Refer to guidance document for scoring criteria.</i></p>
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Data Protection

Under the UK Data Protection Legislation, where an individual person is identifiable this constitutes personal data. Institutions are responsible for verifying that any individuals named or pictured in the narrative statements are made aware and have agreed to their name/image being shared with Research England for the purpose of being published on the KEF website and being processed by UKRI and NCCPE for reporting and analysis purposes.

Submission of the narrative statements to Research England will act as confirmation that appropriate privacy information has been provided to the individuals by the institution.