

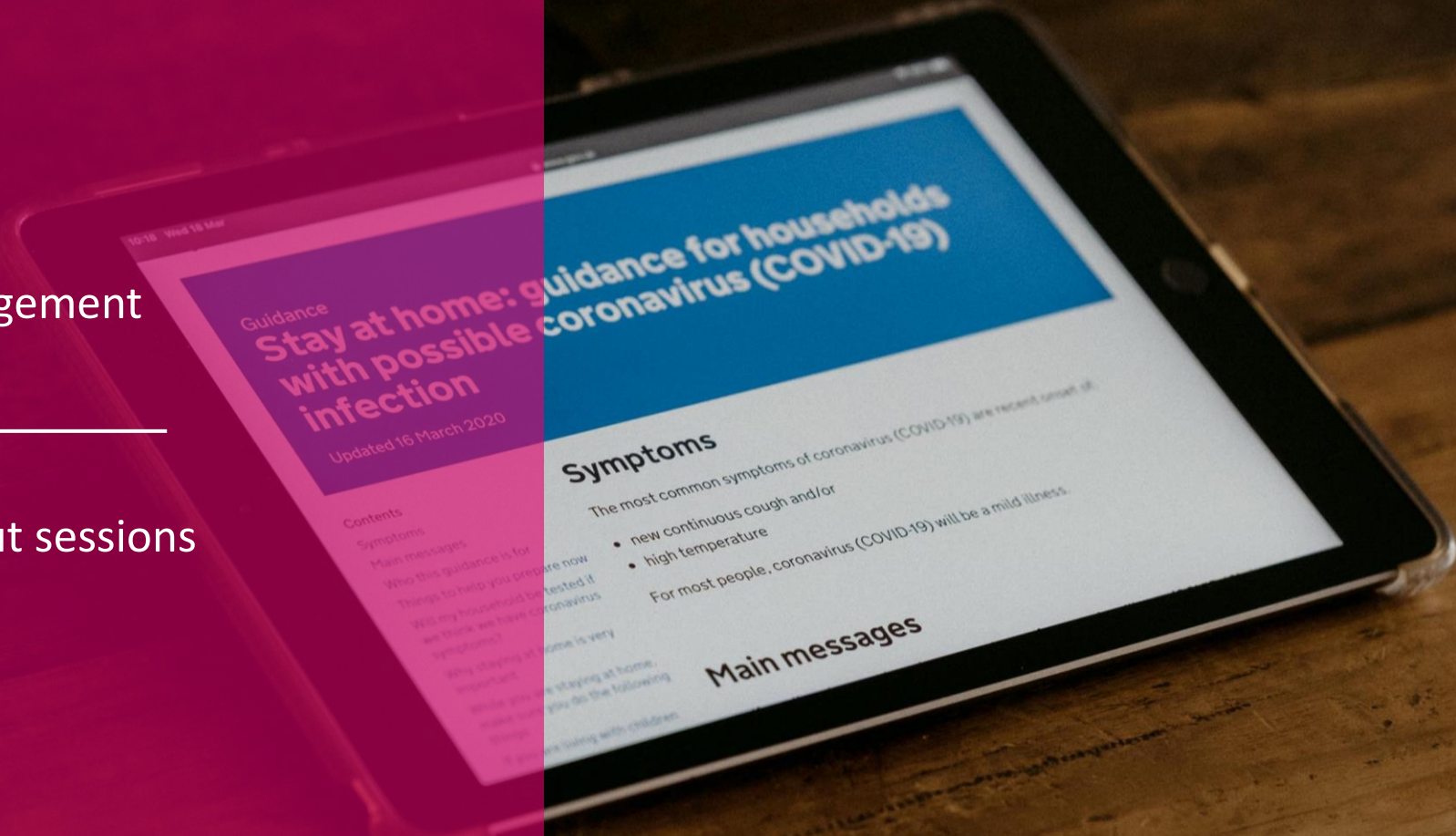


Civic University
Network

Covid-19 and Civic Engagement 17 July 2020

Key points from breakout sessions

- Arts and Culture
 - Civil Society
 - Local Government
-



Arts and Culture



- The Arts & Culture sector hold lots of energy and passion for building relationships with Universities / wider HE sector and a commitment to making it work
- The slow thinking in universities and space for reflection, thought, and for stepping back / sense making is highly valued across the Arts & Culture sector
- The importance of relationships and the people nature of this work. Committees, frameworks and infrastructure are great but ultimately it is the people that take the time to talk, and to join things up within the university that make a difference
Investing in people and relationships is critical to achieve good outcomes
- Understanding the nature of the arts and cultural sector. The bulk of the sector are tiny organisations (97% SMEs) that have been deeply affected by the current situation
The temptation of universities is to work with the larger cultural organisations but if institutions are to be truly civic and responsible then understanding the dynamics, make up and nature of the sector is important
- There is a sense that there are still profound issues around equity and inclusion that collectively we can move forward on
- Thinking about collective impact and ways in which value can be articulated. Building the national picture by sharing stories of the wealth of practice that exists



Civil Society

- We are at a pivotal moment, a huge groundswell of mutual aid and new community organisations but are not always visible, neighbourhood WhatsApp groups etc.
- How do we look at that community power and connect that with existing civil society infrastructure? Huge amounts of practice and positive work going on, how do we connect them up while enabling community muscle to take greater control in local places
- Need to transfer greater power to local government / councils to support the effort and recognise that their power has been shifted in the past decade
- How can universities work with Civil Society organisations around evidence? Looked at Community research and hyperlocal booster samples. Power To Change looking at what is happening hyper locally by using a previous model, reinvigorated for the current day
- Social infrastructure – particularly around adult education. How can HEIs support Adult Education that often goes on in social infrastructure spaces? have we lost sight of this and how do we get it back onto the table and learn from those who are doing it well? We need to think very critically and sensitivity about our social infrastructure and how we can make best use to respond to the need for upskilling locally in response to covid-19
- Covid has created stronger links and partnerships but how do we hang on to that. Holding partnership as a principal



Local Government

Risk and opportunity

- The relationships between HEIs and Local Government. The importance of the civic mission at a time of risk to both Local Government and Universities who are both potentially facing huge funding deficits and possible reorganisations and wide-ranging change. The civic mission becomes and point of contact for both to strengthen their own standing and resilience with much to be gained
- Important to learn between institutions other but also between nations. Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland are often neglected but lots of new thinking that England can learn from
- Civic leadership. Building relationships should be done with the wider civil society

Institutional Process

- Both process driven and process heavy sectors. However, Covid 19 has shown it is possible to act swiftly and decisively showing process does not have to be a stumbling block. Need to ensure that where we act swiftly, we do not steamroller over conversations we need to have with wider society

Productive areas for change

- Long term rebuilding. Skills for a Green economy and green jobs. Essential area for HEIs and Local Governments to work together
- Evidence base – what works, what works where and who for. Better communication of this evidence between Local Government and HE sector
- Critical thinking that HE can provide – make sure we do not lose that in our drive to be better partners with each other
- Small offers can make a big difference. Not about competitive advantage between HE institutions but working together without a quid pro quo