

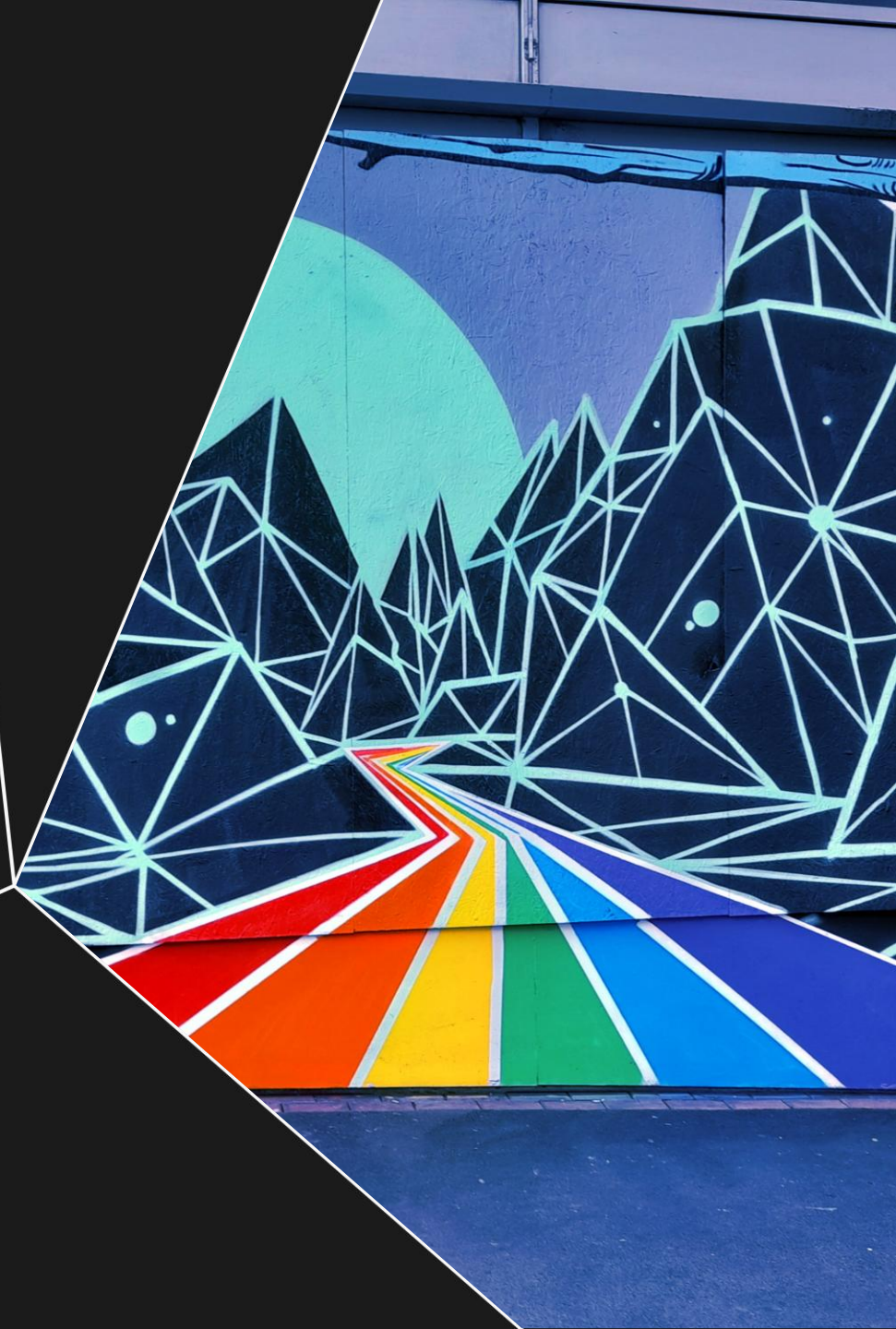
Imagining Wellbeing

Centre for Urban Wellbeing Open Door 2026

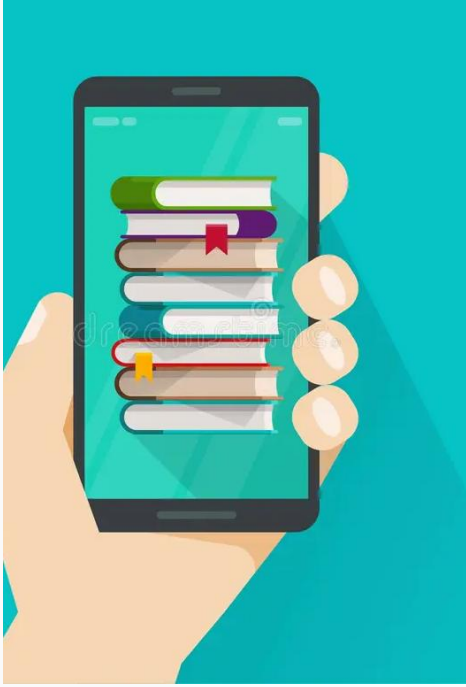
Dr Dorothy Butchard and Dr Gianfranco Polizzi



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Imagining wellbeing



Culture in all its forms, from historical texts to digital media, offers unique insights into lived realities and imagined possibilities.



In our present times, the act of imagining and promoting wellbeing involves a focus and research on both digital and embodied contexts.



Creative representations across traditional and digital media can support the inclusion and expression of marginalised experiences.



Community arts practices help promote belonging and self-care: for different forms of happiness, flourishing, comfort and rejuvenation.



We can draw on communities' creative expression to explore the impacts of urban infrastructures on wellbeing, while also promoting media literacy skills to help them navigate digital environments.



Creative workshops and collaborations with community arts organisations and practitioners, e.g. events for Heritage Open Days, Neurodiversity Celebration Week, and Neighbourhood Futures Festival.

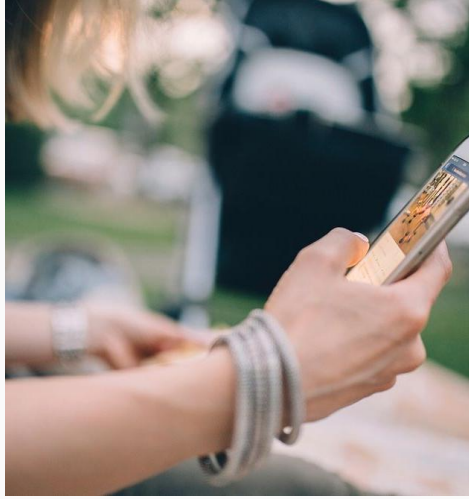
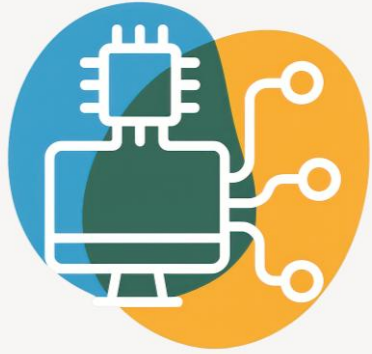
Research events to build connections within and beyond the University; e.g. workshops exploring wellbeing and environments, Digital Media and Society seminar series.

Funding for local public engagement and impact activities, for example workshops with creative arts and media organisations Reimagine Redditch, Rural Media and The Word Association.

Policy work on media literacy campaigns and resources to support teachers in the delivery of media literacy lessons.

Future researchers Centre-UB funding for a collaborative and interdisciplinary PhD with partners in Birmingham City Council's Creative Health team.





Supporting Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Age of AI

Dorothy Butchard, Gianfranco Polizzi and Roxana Baiasu, University of Birmingham

(IDAI Collision Grant)

Improving wellbeing-focused online media literacy in schools

Gianfranco Polizzi, with University of York, PSHE, Internet Matters, National Literacy Trust, Pathfinder Teaching School Hub, Wise Kids

(Nuffield)

Worldbuilding and Ethical Game Design

Dorothy Butchard, Jeremy Kidwell and Bettina Bodi, with media education charity Rural Media and local games developers.

(AHRC IAA User Engagement Fund)

Midlands Mosaics: Art and Industry in the Midlands

Dorothy Butchard and Niall Gallen, with community arts organisation Reimagine Redditch

(AHRC IAA Impact Development Fund; Public Engagement with Research Fund)

Birmingham ArtWays: Creative Connections for Wellbeing

Dorothy Butchard, with The Word Association, Allens Cross Community Centre and now developing with National Trust 8 Hills project

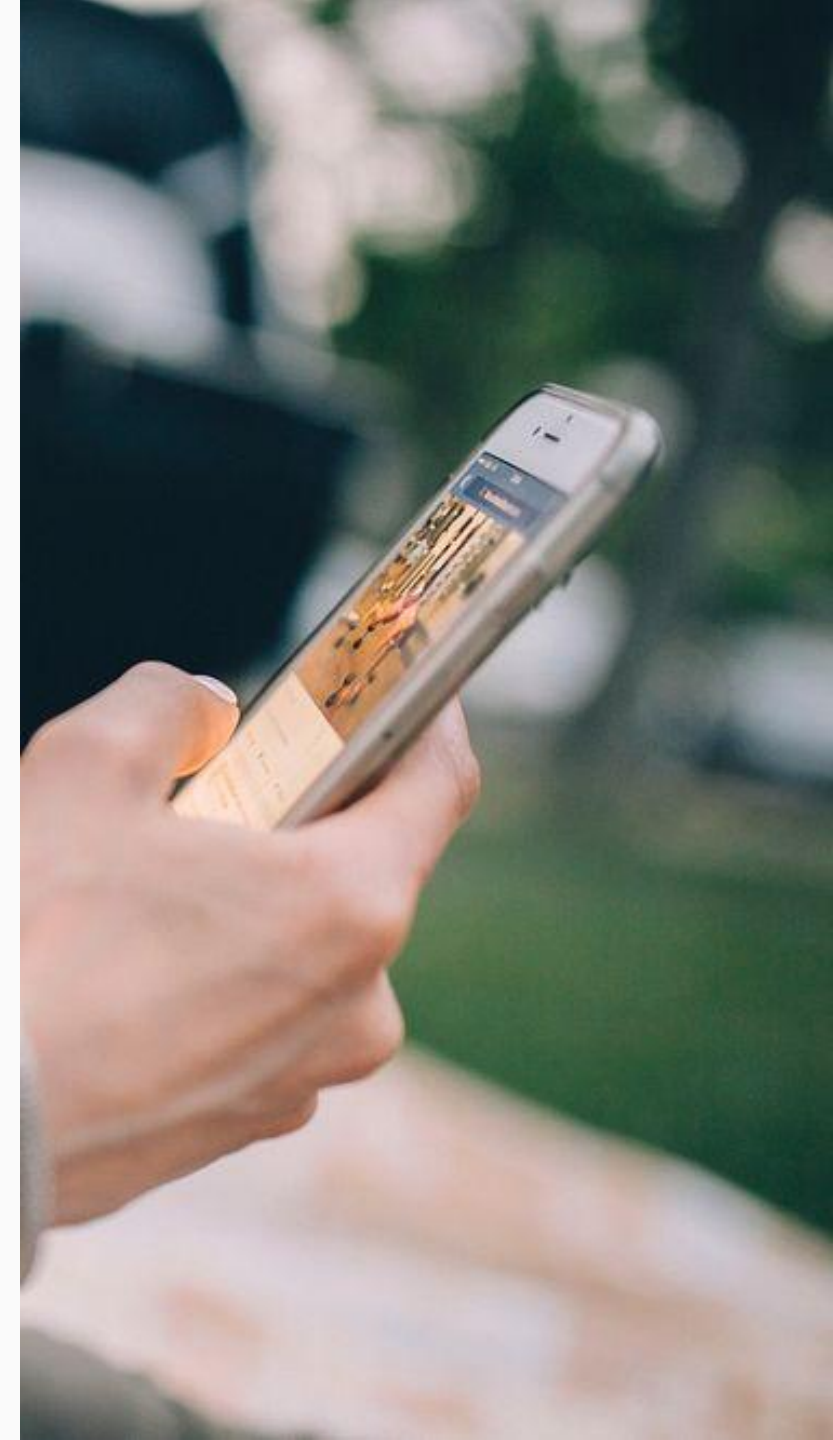
(BISCA seed funding)

Policy-Related Work and Partners

- Advice on the Department of Science and Technology's (DSIT) development of a media literacy campaign to equip UK parents with the know-how to protect their children from online harms.
- Advice on the development of PSHE resources to support teachers in the delivery of media literacy lessons on deepfakes designed to facilitate socioemotional learning.
- Attended and contributed to a multistakeholder media literacy event (organised by the UK Media and Information Literacy Alliance) with academics, civil society practitioners and policymakers.
- Member of a working group established by Ofcom to provide advice on media literacy research, including their latest work on UK children's and adults' use of AI tools and conversational agents.



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Organisations we've been collaborating with



Change your story



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology

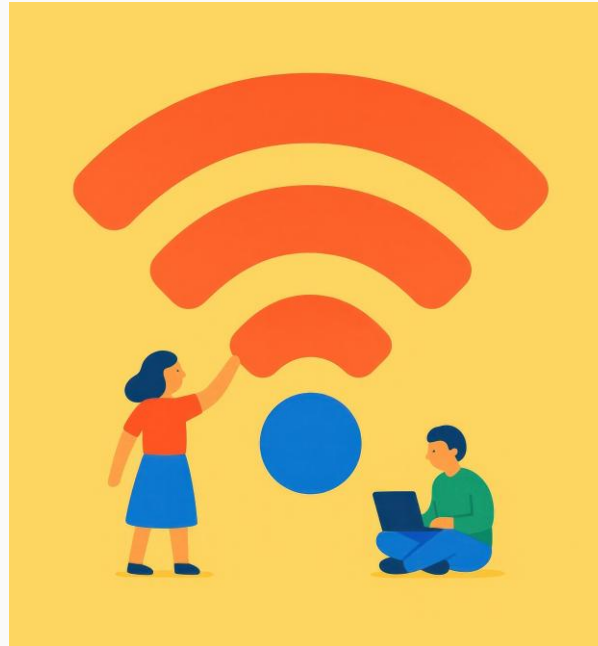


Upcoming events



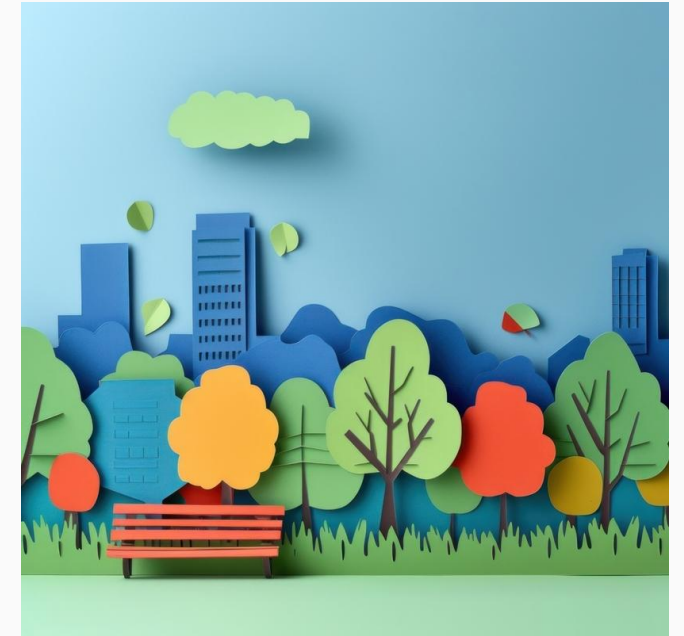
Worldbuilding and Play

1 April 2026, Institute for
Advanced Studies



Media, Emotion and Relationships Education

23 April 2026, Institute for
Advanced Studies



Urban Nature Creative Workshop

W/c 22 June, for Healing
Arts Week



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Imagining Wellbeing

Welcome to the online space for Imagining Wellbeing, a thematic strand within the Centre for Urban Wellbeing based at the University of Birmingham.

Centre for Urban Wellbeing



Events & Activities

We run creative workshops for community projects and hold research events to explore creative approaches to wellbeing across disciplines. You can find out about our past and future events here.

Learn More

Connect with us

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