fusebrief

Co-creating six knowledge sharing principles for public health research

To increase the impact of scientific research on policy and practice, the NIHR School for Public Health Research created a set of theoretically and empirically-informed knowledge sharing principles for its research programmes. The principles were co-created between academics and practitioners from the School's eight centres, including Fuse.

Getting research evidence to inform practice and policy is neither straight-forward nor guaranteed. Research is more likely to be considered relevant, useful, and used if it takes account of what public health knowledge is needed; the context in which it will be used; and what the people using it already know.

The aim of this research was to learn 'what works' (and is working) in sharing knowledge effectively and to use this to agree knowledge sharing principles across the NIHR School for Public Health Research (SPHR) to guide researchers. The principles are broad-purpose to enable applicants to consider the issues, decide what they mean, and how they apply in any particular piece of research, whilst maintaining the integrity of that research.

All eight SPHR centres participated in the study with the data collection taking place between May and October 2017. The six principles were informed by:

- Existing literature on 'what works' in sharing knowledge (based on 37 of 70 existing reviews)
- Shared examples of good practice across SPHR
- Examples of principles from other funding bodies in the UK and internationally
- Views of academics, practice and policy partners and others involved in sharing knowledge and working collaboratively in public health (22 in-depth interviews).

The principles were agreed across the SPHR centres and membership via:

- Two questionnaires (Delphi method): 52 people (26 academic and 26 non-academic) replied in the first round and 73 people (39 academic and 34 non-academic) in the second round
- Two workshops with 19 and 15 participants respectively (34 in total).

Across the eight members of the SPHR there are examples of good practice in working closely with policy and practice partners (PPPs) to produce and share useful research evidence. Much is to be gained by harnessing this expertise.

The six principles are:

1. **Clarify your purpose and knowledge sharing goals** - what do you want your findings to do, or to change?

2. **Identify knowledge users and stakeholders** - who would be interested in this research, or need to know about it?

3. **Design the research to use the expertise of the knowledge users and stakeholders** - how will you design the research to benefit from knowledge user expertise and knowledge?

4. **Agree expectations** - how will you get a shared understanding of what is expected of everyone and what can be achieved?

5. **Monitor, reflect and be responsive in sharing knowledge** - how will you know if your knowledge sharing activities have met your goals?

6. **Leave a legacy** - how can you develop, capture and sustain any benefits?

Policy relevance and implications

- Regular engagement with people who use research or are interested in it, or affected-by it, allows research to remain relevant in changing contexts. Such approaches contribute to the democratisation of the research process and any beneficial changes that result help justify investment made in research.

- The principles are designed to be part of the application for funding and review processes of the NIHR School for Public Health Research (SPHR) and are supported by additional web material.

- Adherence to the principles will help to ensure that the SPHR research programmes are based on both current thinking and best practice in creating and sharing research with policy and practice partners to facilitate usefulness, uptake and impact.

- Applying an interactive approach to developing principles collectively helps to establish the feasibility, acceptability, utility and transferability of shared approaches.

- What works in creating and sharing useful and useable knowledge to help address public health issues, varies according to the topic, context and nature of the research.

" ...people are designing their questions, methods and methodologies, but how are they going to make it translatable and usable? " (academic)

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH

Workshops brought together policy and practice partners, public representatives and NIHR School for Public Health Research (SPHR) academics to share 'what works'. The workshops introduced the existing evidence-base on knowledge exchange approaches and were supported by independent data collection to critically question and establish the feasibility, acceptability, utility and transferability of the approaches shared. A set of knowledge sharing principles, as a basis for knowledge exchange and impact, were co-produced to inform the SPHR research programmes. These will help to ensure that effective knowledge exchange is embedded in SPHR research to facilitate usefulness, uptake and impact.

Rushmer et al. 2019. *Co-creating an agreed set of theoretically and empirically-informed knowledge sharing principles for the SPHR research programmes.* NIHR SPHR Final Research Report.

Web: https://sphr.nihr.ac.uk/research/co-creating-an-agreed-set-of-theoretically-and-empirically-informed-knowledge-sharing-principles-for-the-sphr-research-programme

FURTHER INFORMATION

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