

Collaborations with the Third Sector: Achieving Impact from Research

Susan Davidson, PhD Research Adviser Age UK





Mission – to improve the lives of older people

- Social enterprise and charity
- Five areas of activity
- 170 local Age UKs
- 3000 employees
- 50,000 volunteers
- Turnover £160m + Brand Partners £140m

There are over 200,000 charities in the UK and some much bigger than us!

We aim to underpin everything we do with *c*



Ways we use research:

- Services
- Policy-making and influencing
- Campaigns
- Public education
- Fund-raising
- Enterprises products and marketing

Research for Later Life (Age UK Research)



Overall aim - to produce research solutions for an ageing society by:

- Funding and commissioning 'Research into Ageing' (Health & Well-being) Social research Services and evaluation research
- Translating research findings to produce an evidence base for policy, practice, products and services (including market research)
- Developing mutually beneficial research relationships at all levels



Problem: many older people contacted Age UK about their issues and challenges with social care.

Age UK realised this was a systemic problem, and a priority for us to action.

- **Campaigns Team**: gathered research evidence about problems, needs, what does and does not work. Planned and carried out a campaign
- **Research Team**: in addition to helping gather research, worked with Dr Julien Forder, a Principal Research Fellow at PSSRU at the London School of Economics, and his model to estimate future costs of social care; modified model and make predictions and recommendations for Government in a report.
- Media Team: helped get the issue and Age UK's efforts publicised.
- **Policy Team**: met MPs and other key people, gave interviews, blogs.
- Local partners and shops: gathered 130,000 signatures on petitions from around the country to give the Government, met local MPs

The report and petition were read by key decision-makers in Government; these helped shape a White Paper on this issue and a new bill.



- Development of the exercise programmes in the NSF falls services (2001)
- Development of the DWP ageing strategy in 'Opportunity Age' (2005)
- Development of the Social Exclusion Units strategy in 'A Sure Start to Later Life' (2006)
- Development of treatment for reducing post-event inflammation in thrombotic stroke (2009)
- Changes to the diagnosis and treatment of urinary incontinence (2010)
- Removal of the default retirement age (2011)

Challenges that charities have with research



- Small amounts of money to spend
- Limited access to published research
- Academic research not easy to engage with
- Different priorities
- Messages 'so what'?



We need researchers to work with us!

- 'Stakeholder' input from the beginning, not just a letter of support
- Help us understand findings and their implications, how they could fit in with or update existing resources, possible ways of using them



Impact!

Getting findings known, disseminated, used – services, influence policy-makers/politicians, practitioners, older people and their families, the public...

What is research impact?



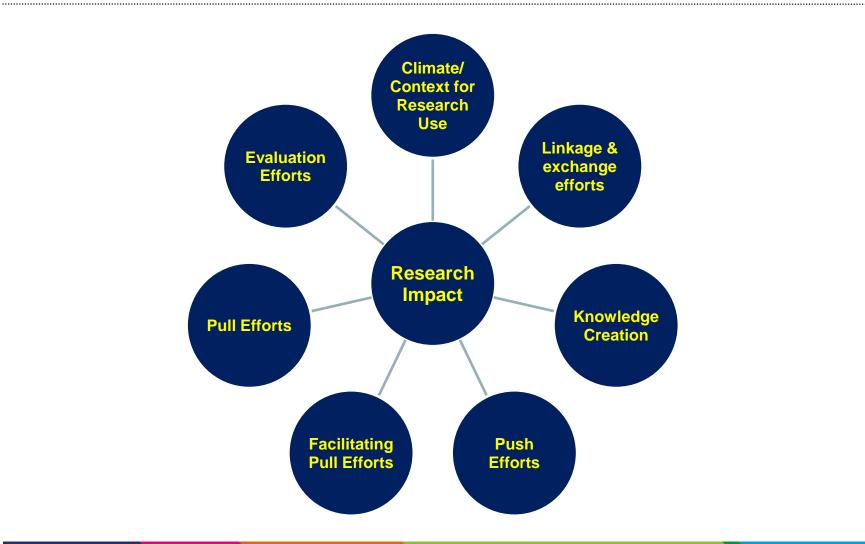
Impact is defined as an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia

Impact includes but is not limited to:

- the activity, attitude, awareness, behaviour, capacity, opportunity, performance, policy, practice, process or understanding
- of an audience, beneficiary, community, constituency, organisation or individuals
- in any geographic location whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally

The WHO KT Framework





Research Team can get messages out to many audiences within our scope through:



- communications internally to staff
- monthly seminars to staff and invited others
- monthly bulletin to a professional audiences
- blogs
- articles on our website
- pod casts short interview with you
- Age UK Radio for interviews
- Campaigns, Media, Policy, Services, and Fundraising Teams, local partners & shops, our relationships with key people...



Thank you!

Susan Davidson, PhD Research Adviser Age UK

susan.davidson@ageuk.org.uk