

# Collaborations with the Third Sector: Achieving Impact from Research

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# Introduction to Age UK

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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 **evidence**

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## 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)

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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



# Example: Care in Crisis Campaign

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**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.



## More examples of Age UK Research Impact

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- 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

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



# Overcoming these

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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





# What researchers get out of this

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## **Impact!**

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



# What is research impact ?

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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:

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- 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!

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