

Lesson in collaborative research partnerships

Dancing, backstage dating, the power of cookies,
and hiding destructive information

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'Knowing'

'Doing'

CLOSE THE GAP

“Bringing diverse communities together to share and create new knowledge in the context of its use to actively change something”

[Knowledge Mobilisation Alliance](#)

What stops knowledge from being mobilised?

'PUSH'

- Takes too long to report
- No actionable recommendations
- Fails to address most pressing local issues



'PULL'

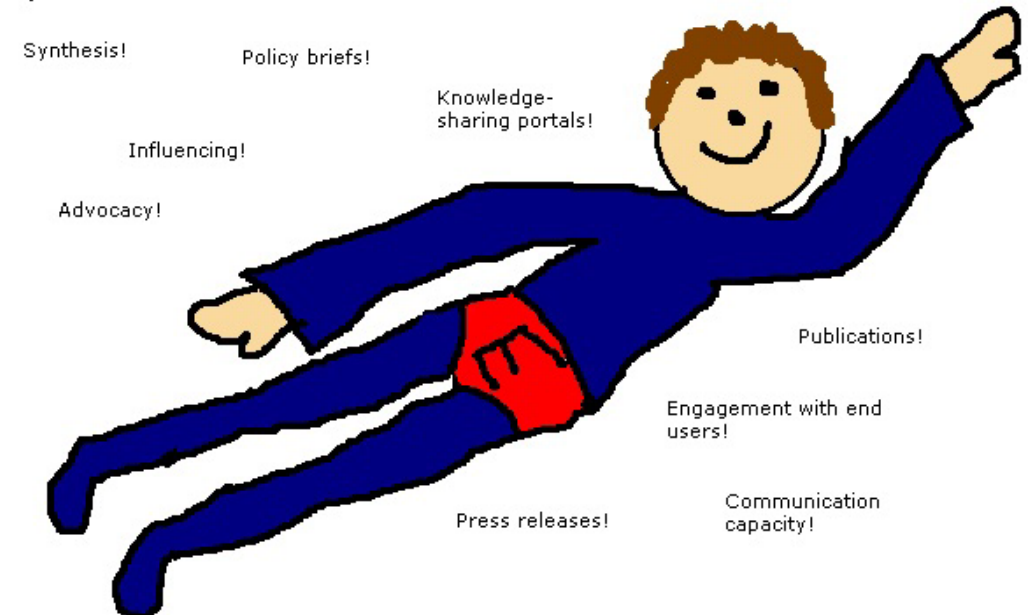
- Research evidence still has to be adapted to local context
- Evidence needed may not be available
- Practitioners may lack skills searching, appraising and synthesising evidence

➔ ***Need for collaborative spaces to bring evidence producers and user together***

So, what is AskFuse ?

- A rapid response and evaluation service launched in 2013
- Acts as a portal to broker access to expertise in five North East Universities
- Free initial conversation(s) to explore needs
- Match enquiries to relevant academics
- Build long-term working collaborations
- ➔ Improve flow of evidence into practice

Evidence to the rescue



What has AskFuse done?

- Over 450 enquiries received
- 40+ funded research projects
(incl. 5 PhDs)
- >£1Mln research income generated
(average contract value: £32K)
- Created meaningful partnerships
(3 MoU's signed)
- Joint publications and funding
applications
- Joint events, publications, funding
applications

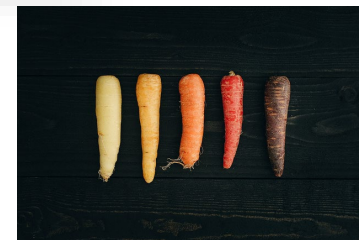
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*... difference made by many conversations
with policy and practice partners?*

Challenges

- A portal is only the start of a conversation
- Limits to collaboration
- It's not all about the money but it certainly helps
- Working with change
- Changing evidence bases



Performing collaborative research: a dramaturgical reflection on an institutional knowledge brokering service in the North East of England

[Peter van der Graaf](#) , [Janet Shucksmith](#), [Rosemary Rushmer](#), [Avril Rhodes](#) & [Mark Welford](#)

[Health Research Policy and Systems](#) 17, Article number: 49 (2019) | [Cite this article](#)



Learning from others

- 5 Public Health Research Centres of Excellence (PHR CoE) funded in 2008 by UKCRC
- Each PHR CoE developed their own model for knowledge exchange



WWW. Volume 40, Issue suppl_1
March 2018

JOURNAL ARTICLE

Structural approaches to knowledge exchange: comparing practices across five centres of excellence in public health FREE

P Van der Graaf ✉, O Francis, E Doe, E Barrett, M O'Rorke, G Docherty

Journal of Public Health, Volume 40, Issue suppl_1, March 2018, Pages i31–i38,

<https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fox150>

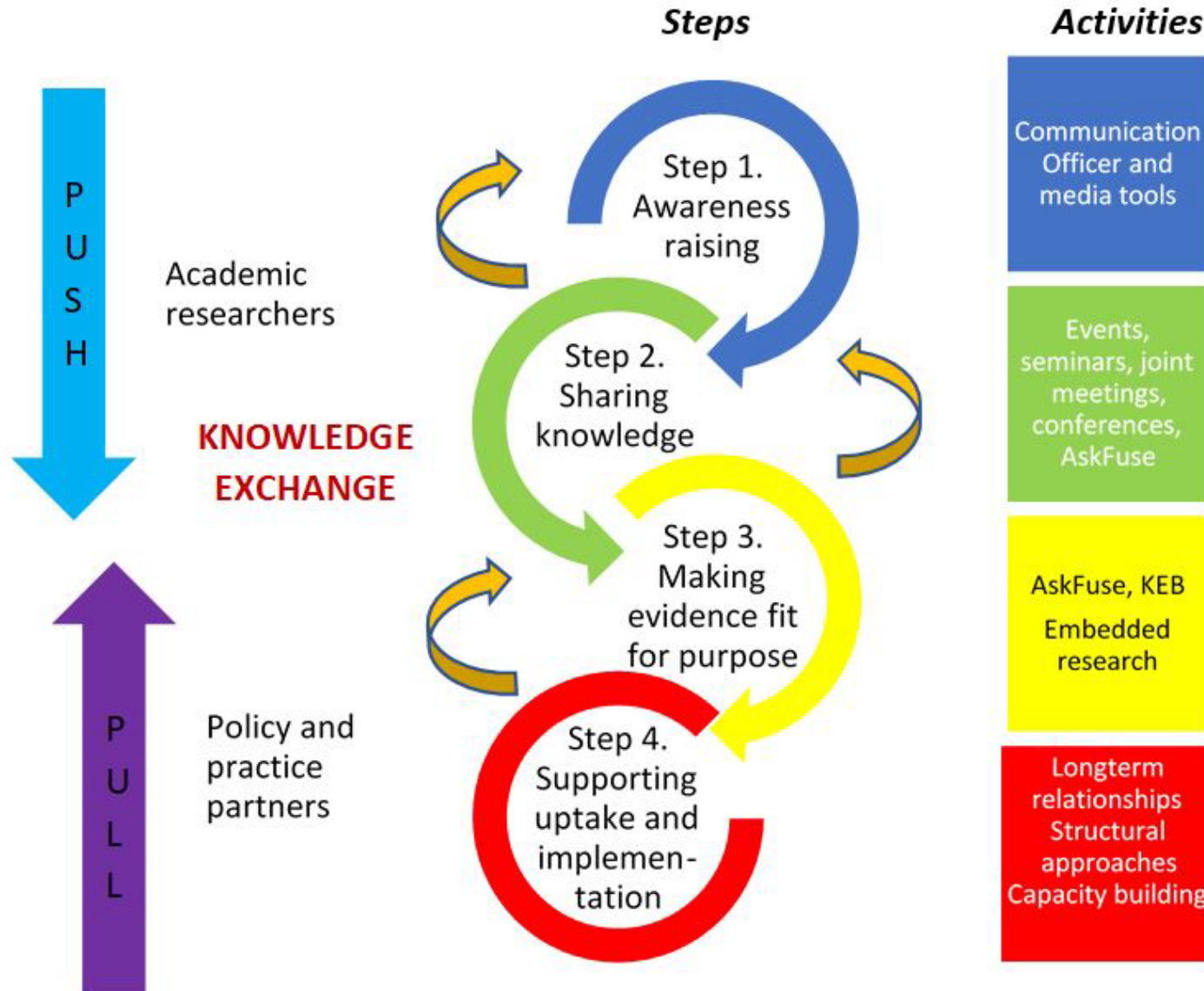
Published: 09 March 2018 [Article history](#) ▼

What did we find?

- Different KE practices in response local needs and existing structures -> **no silver bullet**
- Importance of **linking range of activities** that engage at different levels and points in decision making
- Keep long term focus for **developing structural approaches** to KE: be flexible and enable iterations
- **Build KE capacity within researchers** not just KE professionals at all stages of career pathways



Fuse knowledge exchange model



Van der Graaf, P., Cheetham, M., Lake, A., Welford, M., Rushmer, R., Shucksmith, J., Mobilising knowledge in public health: reflections on 10 years of collaborative working in Fuse, the Centre for Translational Research in Public Health. *Evidence & Policy*. 2019. 16(4), 673-685.



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The Centre for Translational
Research in Public Health

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Knowledge exchange as staged performances

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**The danger of incoherent performances:
destructive information**



Need for back stage



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Collective moaning



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**Dealing with
change:
discrepant roles**



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Knowledge exchange as a dance?

- **Practicing everyday skills:** listening, emotional intelligence and persuasion
- Relating knowledge to **people's sense of self** to make it relevant
- **Acknowledging feelings:** implementation barriers for knowledge are often personal (“stubborn practitioners and lazy scientists”)
- Develop **instinct for where you are in the dance:** spending time in each other's context

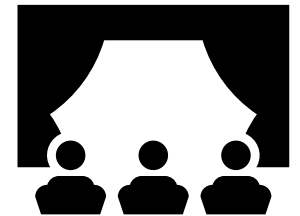
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“Be more Ed Balls!”

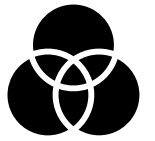
Practicing your dancing skills

- Learn **four basic steps** to learn:
 1. *Raising awareness*, using creative communication
 2. *Knowledge sharing* through joint events
 3. *Making evidence fit for purpose* (localising and tailoring)
 4. *Supporting uptake and implementation* (capacity, co-production, linking activities)
- Create and use **backstages** to rehearse performances and hide destructive information
- A **deviant knowledge broker** can help to facilitate backstage conversations and distract from missteps



Implications (continued)

- **Go with the music** based on ongoing relationships between researchers and practitioners
- **Emotional engagement** is essential to get a better feel for the music. Don't forget the [power of cookies!](#) 
- **Embedded research** helps to develop an instinct for the dance, based on a better understanding of each other's organisational contexts
- Public health is **political**; **lobbying and advocacy** are a core part of knowledge brokering and embedded research roles



Some challenges still remain

- Lack of **structural incentives in academia** to support knowledge exchange
- Lack of **training in the craft** of knowledge exchange
- Lack of **leadership** to support and resource knowledge exchange
- Lack of **mentoring** for embedded researchers and a community of practice to share failures and learning
- Lack of **research on practices of KE**: how to do it instead of how it could be done or what it should look like? (toothbrush problem)



Future of AskFuse

- Build capacity of staff and students new to research (SEARCH and SUPPORT pilots)
- Support and link HDRCs in our region
- Facilitate links between ARCs, RDNs, HDRCs, PHIRST
- Develop more research on the practice of knowledge exchange

Your services are no longer needed



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