

Mobilising knowledge to improve UK health care: learning from other countries and other sectors – a multimethod mapping study

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Plain English summary

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The study looked at the approaches to encourage research use (sometimes called 'knowledge mobilisation') chosen by research agencies that fund, produce or share research in health care, social care and education in the UK and (in health care only) internationally. The study aimed to map the approaches being used, discover what factors were driving their use and learn from any formal or informal evaluations. The study used a combination of research methods including a review of the literature, a review of the agencies' websites, 52 in-depth interviews with key individuals from the agencies, an online survey and two stakeholder workshops.

Key findings included the following:

- Research agencies are using a range of knowledge mobilisation approaches, from the traditional to the more innovative, but often do so in a rather makeshift way.
- Agencies struggle to apply the theoretical literature in developing these approaches, and find it hard to evaluate them in practice.
- There is rich learning and experience within agencies, but relatively little cross-learning between agencies and sectors.

Key outputs from the study include:

- a 'conceptual map' to help make sense of the published literature on knowledge mobilisation
- the development of eight 'archetypes' or 'bundles of knowledge mobilisation activities' to demonstrate the range of options that agencies can explore.

These two outputs are being developed into practical tools to help research agencies to develop more effective knowledge mobilisation activities and thus help to increase research use in the NHS to improve patient care.

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