

A strategy for knowledge exchange

2018 – 2022

Building the evidence base to support public health practice



A strategy for knowledge exchange

Our vision

The NIHR School for Public Health Research (SPHR) aims to increase and improve the evidence base for cost-effective, generalisable or transferrable, and equitable public health interventions. It aims to create an environment where first class applied public health research, focused on the needs of the public, can thrive, and where local practitioners, policy makers and the public can engage with research from the earliest planning stages. It also aims to support practitioners and policy makers to actively seek out high quality research evidence to inform their decisions by making our outputs practical, relevant, accessible and timely.

Purpose of the Knowledge Exchange Strategy

The purpose of knowledge exchange is to combine the strengths of each interacting partner and find effective ways of working together to create the evidence needed. For the SPHR this means the scientific rigour of the academics and the contextual and practical insight of policy makers and practitioners being brought together in ways that are mutually beneficial. Fundamentally, if we want more *evidence-informed practice*, we need more *practice informed evidence*, therefore knowledge exchange is a key cross-cutting principle for SPHR research. The aim is for this Strategy to be a living document that is actionable and its impact measurable. The SPHR has diverse and wide ranging academic expertise, with ongoing and existing knowledge exchange work, and established relationships. The Strategy recognises this and draws out learning to improve our activity going forward. This document should be read alongside the NIHR SPHR Policy and Practice Engagement and Collaboration Strategy.

Knowledge exchange strategic objectives

The overarching goal is to embed a culture that is receptive and responsive to the acquisition and application of knowledge and evidence among researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners. Figure 1 indicates the objectives for achieving this, which overlap and interact as detailed below. The SPHR Knowledge Sharing Principles (see page 3) also cut across all of the strategic objectives.

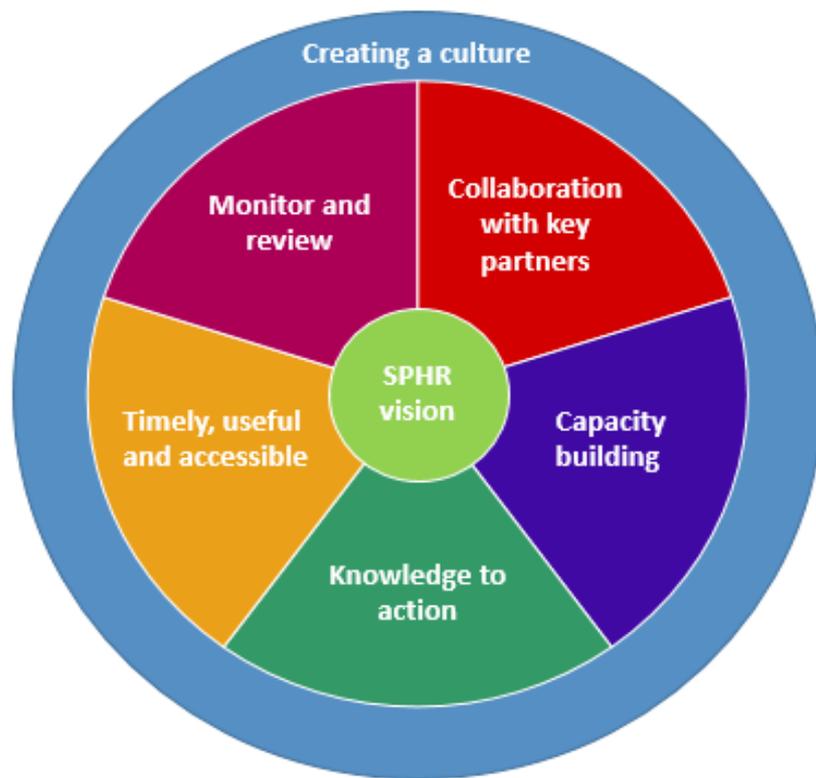


Figure 1: SPHR knowledge exchange strategic objectives.

Collaboration with key partners

This is an integral part of our work and creating opportunities for the co-creation of research and multi-directional knowledge exchange is vital. To achieve this the School will continue to work with public health policy, practice partners and associated sectors (e.g. housing, education, environment) respecting and valuing disciplinary expertise and different perspectives. Key elements include:

- Relationship and trust building;
- Joint priority setting and identification of research needs;
- Building on our innovative Public Health Practice Evaluation Scheme (PHPES);
- Connecting with existing structures, such as PHE, CLAHRC/ARCs, AHSN, ADPH, LA, NIHR SSC and PCR, and the LGA; and
- Shared learning and reciprocal relationships.

Building capacity

The School will continue to build an infrastructure to support the knowledge exchange objectives and ultimately our research aims. Key elements include:

- SPHR knowledge exchange brokerage (as detailed on page 5): building the role and embedding across the School;
- Creating opportunities – supportive infrastructure and culture, space and resource;
- Central support processes, e.g. inclusion of the Knowledge Sharing Principles in the research documentation, website development, knowledge exchange brokerage; and
- Creating a sustainable legacy – training and resources, tracking progress and engaging PhD students and ECRs.

Knowledge to action

Taking the steps to move beyond knowledge and evidence creation, to mobilising this knowledge into practice and policy. Key elements include:

- Using collaborations with partners to develop research that is suitable for the context and useable;
- Engaging with the barriers and enablers to effective knowledge exchange, identified by policy and practice, through early interactions and building on existing connections;
- Developing actionable messages and sustainable outputs –and tools; and
- Ongoing collaboration beyond research projects to understand and develop ways of making key messages and outputs sustainable in context.

Timely, useful and accessible

A key focus is to not only produce useful research, but to do this in a timely manner and make the process and findings accessible to our key partners. Key elements include:

- Use of the Knowledge Sharing Principles;
- Co-creation of knowledge;
- Developing formats and outputs that are accessible and tailored to the specific needs of key partners; and
- Synthesis of evidence to answer policy and practice questions.

Monitor and review

The Strategy has a built in review processes to track progress and to enable the ongoing learning to be feedback into the Strategy. Key elements include:

- Creating case studies – best practice, success stories, learning for improvement;
- Tracking progress and driving agenda through Strategy implementation and review;
- Capturing and recording impact pathways (NIHR reporting, knowledge exchange tracking and REF);

- Gathering collective learning in knowledge mobilisation across the SPHR programmes and themes, reflecting on this as an organisation and with partners;
- Feedback from policy and practice partners about engagement with SPHR and the impact on their work.

Knowledge Sharing Principles

The co-created SPHR Knowledge Sharing Principles (Rushmer et al, 2018) are at the heart of this Strategy. The principles are based on best practice and current evidence in sharing and creating research with our practice and policy partners, with the aim of producing research that is useful, accessible and impactful. To this end, the principles have been incorporated into the current SPHR research planning documentation with the aim of embedding this from the beginning of the research process (creating a culture), with the ultimate aim of co-creating research that is fit for purpose, accessible and high quality. The principles also encourage that time and resource is allocated to effective knowledge exchange and embeds practitioner views from the beginning of the process, rather than it being a bolt-on. **The six principles are:**

1. Clarify your purpose and knowledge sharing goals
2. Identify knowledge users
3. Design the research to incorporate the expertise of the knowledge users
4. Agree Expectations
5. Monitor, reflect and be responsive in sharing knowledge
6. Leave a legacy

Knowledge exchange activities

The purpose of knowledge exchange activities should be to create opportunities, build capacity and engage partners. They are the practical ways of facilitating the exchange of knowledge between key partners and academics, such as: meetings, workshops, regular contact, engagement, products (briefings, tools, resources) and events. These are context specific and should be undertaken in relation to the strategic objectives.

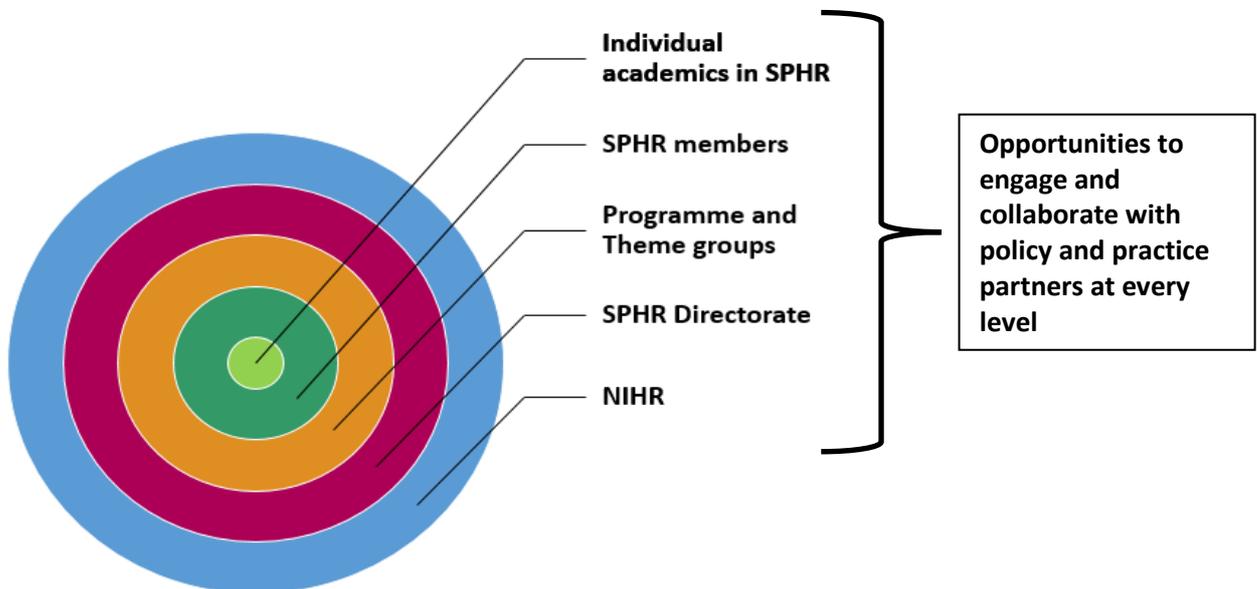


Figure 2: Multi-level approach - SPHR levels of knowledge exchange activity.

The knowledge exchange activities undertaken by the SPHR Knowledge Exchange Broker can cut across all levels.

SPHR Knowledge Exchange Broker

Knowledge Exchange Broker (KEB) is a new role within SPHR and a key part of the current business plan. The KEB will work with the SPHR members, the Communications Manager and School Manager to implement this Strategy. The role is evolving and the development, implementation and review of this Strategy is integral to the role. A key function is to design, develop and engage with knowledge exchange activities that support the strategic objectives. Below are examples of developing and ongoing work:

- Acting as a ‘critical friend’ in the planning of engagement activities and knowledge exchange, e.g. support with planning a stakeholder event that anticipates ‘negative’ findings;
- Programme level: discussing and commenting on knowledge exchange plans going forward;
- Member level: establishing role and point of contact with each member;
- Future work: creating opportunities for practitioners, decision makers and academics to meet, organising and facilitating training and workshops for ECRs and developing a contacts database.

The knowledge exchange work can be supported, facilitated and overseen by the SPHR Knowledge Exchange Broker. However, as this is an integral, cross-cutting principle for SPHR, it is expected that each member and programme/theme embed the objectives within their work and effectively reports their knowledge mobilisation work.

Key partners

The School’s relationship with its key partners is vital to meeting the research aims. A different approach and format may be required for each of these groups both in collaboration, engagement and knowledge mobilisation. Key partners include:

- **Members of the public:** this Strategy should be read in combination with the NIHR SPHR Public Involvement and Engagement Strategy that addresses this partner specifically based on SPHR research findings;
- **Practitioners:** frontline staff providing public health services, third sector providers;
- **Policy makers:** local, regional, national;
- **Decision makers:** commissioners, managers, service improvement specialist; and
- **Charities, organisation and bodies that represent these groups.**

Strategic objectives review process

SPHR provide good examples of effective knowledge exchange within previous and current research projects and strong links with policy and practice partners. The development and implementation of the SPHR knowledge sharing principles demonstrates continuing commitment to this approach. Embedding these principles in research documentation and processes, will ensure that collaboration and co-production is embedded in SPHR research.

The intention for the regular review processes is to take a flexible and reactive approach, whilst still driving the knowledge exchange agenda. Knowledge exchange is context specific, therefore this Strategy describes the overarching SPHR level strategic objectives that require application at a local level. SPHR academics planning and undertaking research are expected to comprehensively record their knowledge exchange and collaboration work within SPHR research planning and reporting documentation. This can then be accessed by the SPHR KEB for the purpose of tracking impact, recording success stories and assessing gaps.

Review dates

The strategic objectives will be reviewed by the SPHR Knowledge Exchange Broker every three months on a rolling basis, with a formal six monthly review to be presented to the SPHR Executive. Dates are below for the biannual reviews (remaining flexible to coincide with Executive meetings):

March 2019

October 2019

March 2020

October 2020

March 2021

October 2021

This review work will include planning for the School legacy in knowledge exchange/impact prior to the end of the contract in March 2022.

For more information, please contact sphr@ncl.ac.uk

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The information in this report/brochure is correct at the time of printing.