



NUFFIELD DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY CARE
HEALTH SCIENCES

Dissemination and media: from research to real- world impact

GAVIN HUBBARD | JULY 2025



OUImages/Ian Wallman



NUFFIELD DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY CARE
HEALTH SCIENCES

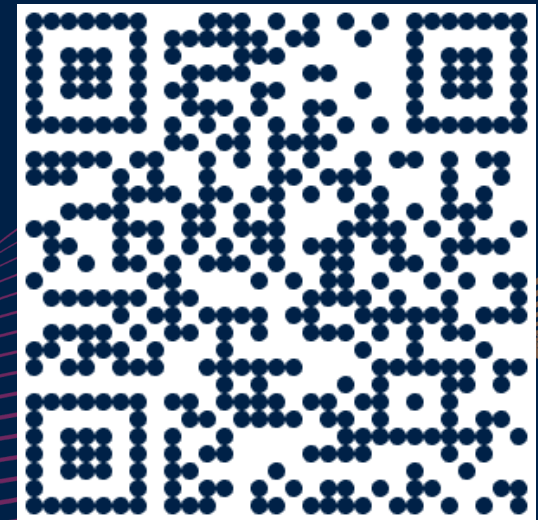
Why Dissemination Matters

In one word, what does 'research impact' mean to you?

Go to vevox.app

Enter the session ID: 121-400-429

Or scan the QR code





##/##

Join at: **vevox.app**

ID: **XXX-XXX-XXX**

Results slide

In one or two words, what does 'research impact' mean to you?

Activity: Why should we strategically disseminate our research?

Think beyond 'it's required' - what are the real benefits?



1. Think (2 mins): Individually, list all the reasons why researchers should strategically plan dissemination.



2. Pair (3 mins): In pairs, share and expand your lists.



3. Share (5 mins): As a group, we will share our ideas.



NUFFIELD DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY CARE
HEALTH SCIENCES

Academic <i>Influencing the field</i>	Policy & practice <i>Changing how things are done</i>	Societal & economic <i>Benefitting the public</i>	Personal & career <i>Developing as a researcher</i>
Being cited by other researchers	Informing clinical guidelines or professional training	Improving patient outcomes or experiences	Building your professional reputation
Generating new research questions or methods	Findings being used in a policy brief	Increasing public understanding of a health issue	Attracting future research funding
Fostering new collaborations	Changing how a health service is designed or delivered	Improving health equity	Being invited to speak at conferences
Contributing to systematic reviews	Informing public health campaigns	Contributing to efficiency savings in the health service	Developing skills in communication and engagement



NUFFIELD DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY CARE
HEALTH SCIENCES

Nice, buuuut....

That's what we *think* dissemination should help with, but
does it?





Academic

- Peer-reviewed scientific publications that receive more attention in popular media are significantly more likely to be cited in subsequent scholarly literature. (Anderson, *et al*, PLOS ONE)
- Self-archiving a version of a research paper makes it freely available, which is associated with a substantial increase in citations compared to paywalled articles.
- (Tourte, G., Science Open Research)

Policy & practice

- Policy briefs are generally considered useful, credible, and easy to understand by decision-makers, but their impact is contingent on factors like author credibility, timing, and audience tailoring. (Arnautu, D. A, Humanities and Social Science Communications)

Societal & economic

- The platform The Conversation is an effective model for overcoming common barriers to research use and translating engagement into the actual use of information by a broad audience. (Penfold, R., Wilson, A, PLOS ONE)
- Randomised controlled trials provide strong evidence that using a visual abstract in a tweet significantly increases user engagement compared to using plain text. (Chisari, E., *et al*, The Journal of Arthroplasty)
- Co-production with communities has led to specific health gains. (Conquer, S., *et al*, International Journal of integrated care)

Personal & career

- **Media attention** predicts citations better than author or journal reputation. (Anderson *et al.*, 2020)



NUFFIELD DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY CARE
HEALTH SCIENCES

Key take aways



1. **Start with a press release** (*if the work is genuinely newsworthy*) – it can increase your chances of media coverage by almost 8x.
2. **Make your work open access** – self-archiving (Green OA) was associated with 157% more citations in one study.
3. **Create visual content** – visual abstracts can more than double social media engagement.
4. **Write for platforms like The Conversation** – they are proven to lead to actual public use of research information, and greater media coverage.
5. **Engage policymakers with the right tools** – 86% of decision-makers find policy briefs useful.
6. **Build sustained partnerships** – long-term relationships are a key facilitator of policy impact.
7. **Co-produce with communities** – this can lead to measurable health improvements, like a 42% increase in screening.
8. **Remember: your dissemination efforts matter** – media attention is a stronger predictor of citations than author or journal reputation.



NUFFIELD DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY CARE
HEALTH SCIENCES

The Dissemination Landscape

Moving from the "why" to the "who" and "how"





Activity: Mapping your dissemination landscape

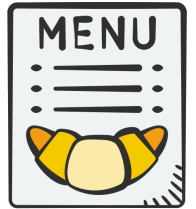
In your groups, discuss the following three questions:

1. Who are your key people or organisations (“stakeholders” 🤢) beyond fellow academics? (e.g. clinicians, patients, NHS managers, policymakers, charities)
2. What channels have you used or could you use to reach them?
3. What has worked? What hasn’t?



The dissemination menu

Choosing the right tool



Starters:

- **Social Media (BlueSky/X):** Backed by RCT evidence for boosting citations.
- **Visual Abstracts:** Proven to >2x engagement.
- **Blogs:** A low-barrier way to explain your work in plain language.

Mains (Substantial, high-impact activities):

- **Media & Press Release:** The most powerful tool for academic amplification (8x more coverage).
- **The Conversation Article:** Translates engagement into actual information use by the public.
- **Policy Brief:** A key tool for reaching decision-makers (86% find them useful).

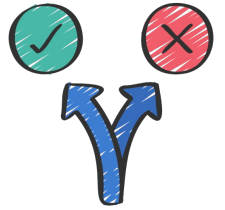
Desserts (Long-term relationship building):

- **Podcasts / YouTube / Webinars:** For engaging niche audiences deeply.
- **Co-production:** Working with stakeholders from the start of a project.
- **Building Networks:** The sustained effort that makes everything else more effective.



How to choose from the menu

Three quick questions to guide your strategy



1) Who are you trying to reach?

- 1) Broad public → Press release, Conversation article
- 2) Specific professionals → LinkedIn, professional networks, podcasts
- 3) Policymakers → Policy brief, targeted meetings

2) What's your timeline?

- 1) Days/weeks → Social media, blogs
- 2) Months → Conversation article, policy brief
- 3) Years → Networks, co-production, sustained engagement

3) What do you want them to do?

- 1) Understand → Blog, visual abstract
- 2) Change practice → Guidelines, toolkits, training
- 3) Fund more research → Press coverage, policy engagement

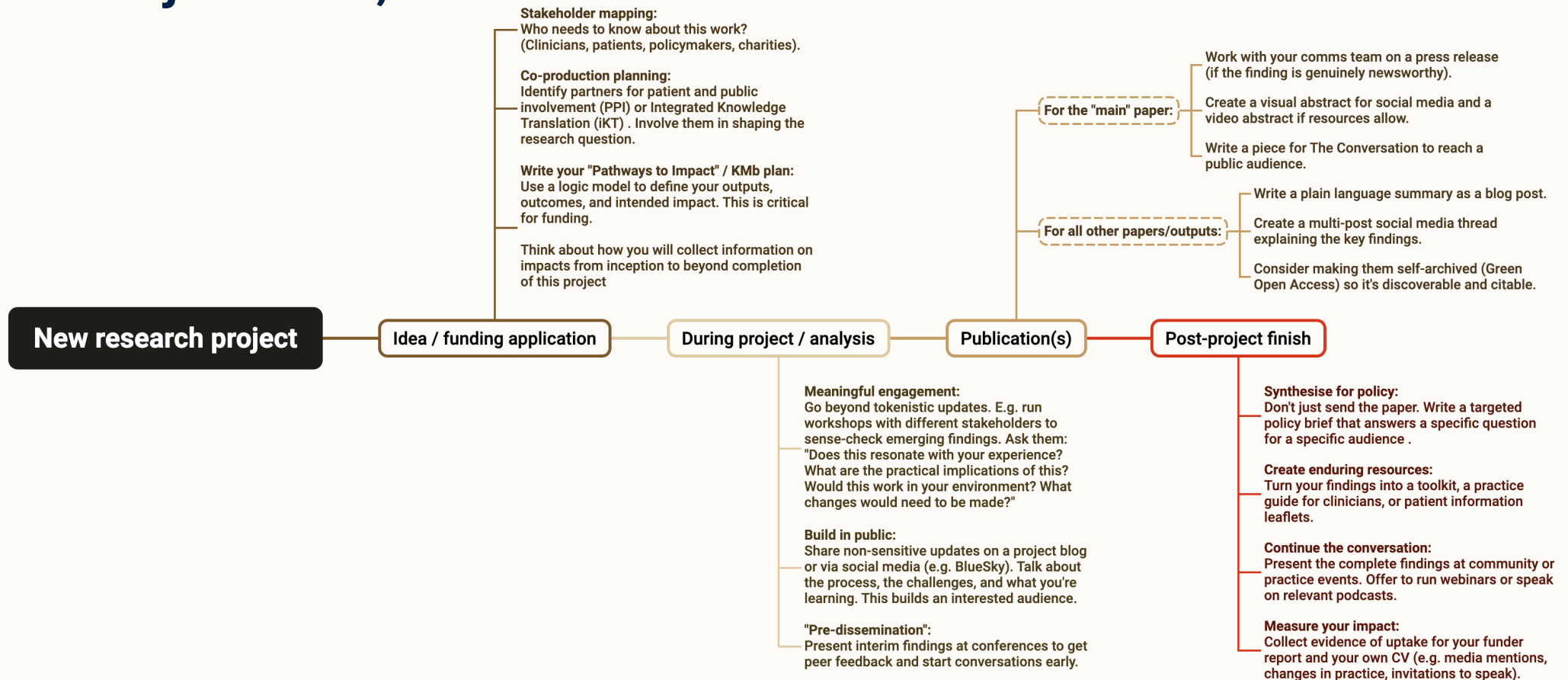


The power of timing

Engage early and often



It's not just what, but when:





NUFFIELD DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY CARE
HEALTH SCIENCES

Working with Media and Press Releases

*with Chris McIntyre, Communications Manager,
Communications Manager (Research and Innovation),
Public Affairs Directorate*



NUFFIELD DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY CARE
HEALTH SCIENCES

Beyond Media – Policy & Digital Strategies





NUFFIELD DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY CARE
HEALTH SCIENCES

Media coverage *raises* awareness; policy engagement aims to *change* practice.

Pillar 1: The right tools

- **Headline:** Policy briefs are effective.
- **Evidence:** 86% of decision-makers find policy briefs to be a useful knowledge transfer tool (Arnautu & Dagenais, 2021).
- **Caveat:** They must be short, jargon-free, and targeted to a specific, timely policy issue.

Pillar 2: The right relationships

Headline: Partnerships are crucial.

Evidence: The evidence shows that sustained, long-term partnerships between researchers and policymakers are a key facilitator for getting research used effectively. (Lawrence et al., 2019).

Resource: Don't have to do it alone.



A spectrum of digital tools: from easy wins to major projects

Low effort / Foundational <i>Things you can do in an hour or two for almost every paper</i>	Medium effort / Planned activities <i>Requires some planning, basic skills, or a small amount of time</i>	High effort / Major projects <i>Strategic choices for your most important work, often requiring collaboration or budget</i>
Plain Language Summary (PLS): Write a 250-word summary of your key findings and their importance. Essential building block for everything else.	Social media 'thread': A planned series of 4-5 posts that break down the paper's story (background, methods, findings, conclusion).	Commissioned infographic or video: Work with a designer or animator to create a high-quality visual asset. Video is linked to a 1.2x citation increase.
Self-Archiving (Green OA): Upload your accepted manuscript to a repository (e.g. ORA).	Blog post: Expand your PLS into a 600-800 word blog for the department or a platform like Medium.	The Conversation article: A competitive but high-impact process working with professional editors. Proven to lead to information use by the public.
Targeted social media post: A single, clear post on BlueSky or LinkedIn with a link to the paper.	DIY visual abstract: Create a simple visual summary using PowerPoint or Canva. (Or speak to your comms team if they can help). Proven to >2x engagement.	Podcast or webinar appearance: Requires significant preparation to discuss your work in depth.



NUFFIELD DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY CARE
HEALTH SCIENCES

Now what? A short toolkit...

Plan your strategy

- The quick Stakeholder Mapper

Create your content

- The Audience Needs Checklist
- The Plain Language Summary Template
- The Policy Brief Structure

Share your work

- The Digital Dissemination Decision Tree

Track your impact

- The "Is It Working?" Tracker
- The Quick Wins Checklist





NUFFIELD DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY CARE
HEALTH SCIENCES

Thank you and questions

Gavin Hubbard

Senior Communications Manager,
Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences
gavin.hubbard@phc.ox.ac.uk

The Slides

The Toolkit



References

