

## Research Design Service (RDS) Research Impact Guide

This short and easy to use guide has been developed for RDS advisors to refer to when providing support and guidance to clients on how they can introduce impact into the design of their research proposal. It can also be shared with clients to help them understand impact and consider some of the more practical measures they can use when undertaking research. The overall aim is to ensure that impact planning, knowledge mobilisation and implementation issues are considered and embedded into the research design and application development process that then ensures that the planned/intended impacts can be realised both during and at the end of the research project.

Each section of the guide contains a number of questions or prompts that you can use when working with a client to design and develop their research application. You may only need to use one of the prompts in a section or all of them – some questions may be more relevant than others depending on the research question. The guide has six sections and at the end of each section there is a link to an external toolkit that can be referred to for more detail if required.

- **Need** – Thinking about why the research is being proposed
- **Engagement and PPI** – How to identify people/groups/stakeholders that could be consulted/involved with the design, development and implementation of the project
- **Goals** – What could be achieved
- **Resources** – How to identify what resources and people need to be involved
- **Pathway to Impact** – Developing a plan
- **KMb/Communication/Dissemination** – How to communicate the research from start to finish

**The NIHR use the following definitions in their impact agenda and these are the ones adopted by RDS:**

**Dissemination** - an active approach to the spreading of research findings to the target audience via determined channels using planned strategies

**Knowledge mobilisation (KMb)** - the process that paves the way to impact being realised by actively bringing stakeholders together throughout the research cycle to share, respond to, and act upon research plans and findings

**Impact** - the demonstrable contribution that research makes to society and the economy, of benefit to individuals, organisations and nations.

For those who want to explore Research Impact in more detail:

The NIHR have a comprehensive impact webpage that includes links to a range of resources:

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/researchers/apply-for-funding/how-to-apply-for-project-funding/plan-for-impact.htm>.

**PLANNING FOR RESEARCH IMPACT**

NEED	ENGAGEMENT PPI	GOALS	RESOURCES	PATHWAY TO IMPACT	Kmb COMMUNICATION DISSEMINATION
<p>Why is the research needed and how can the need be defined?</p> <p>What is the current situation – what overall changes/improvements will the research bring, what changes do you hope to make to wider society, individuals, communities?</p> <p>Can you demonstrate that the need for the research has been explored and evidence obtained?</p> <p>Who will benefit from the research?</p> <p>What are the current impacts of the condition, intervention or treatment to be researched on the social/economic/ behavioural aspects of an individual’s life?</p> <p>Could there be opportunities to make an impact during the course of the project as findings emerge. Could the ‘need’ change as the project develops, think about how the design could adapt if required.</p>	<p>Who outside of academia needs to be involved with the design of the research question?</p> <p>Who are your stakeholders, how will you involve them, who will be influenced by the research - consider the following groups:</p> <p><i>Commissioners; providers of services; clinicians/HCP; policy makers; voluntary groups and other third sector organisations.</i></p> <p><i>People (patients, participants, carers, professionals) who will be involved in the research.</i></p> <p>Create a stakeholder map, use your contacts to identify others who can be included, don’t just list them - get in touch! Don’t assume a stakeholder will want to be involved in the research, work with them at the design stage to get them on board.</p> <p>Are under-served communities included in the research, in its design, delivery and dissemination, will your methods need to be adapted to include them?</p> <p>Include a PPI representative on the project steering group.</p> <p>How to recruit - identify methods for recruiting and engaging.</p>	<p>What are the anticipated changes for patients/ participants?</p> <p>Define the potential changes that will emerge at each phase of the research process.</p> <p>How will progress be monitored – define a process for each stage of the research, starting with baseline assessment where possible.</p> <p>Make an impact time plan and try to identify impact all through the project.</p> <p>How can the monitoring process be used to demonstrate impact at different stages of the research project?</p> <p>What evidence needs to be gathered to show the pathway to impact beyond academia?</p> <p>What aspects of the research process could be used to develop learning tools?</p>	<p>Working with public contributors to design the process will help researchers understand how individuals, carers, families are affected by the condition and process.</p> <p>Who needs to be involved to get the findings adopted into practice – who are the enablers, facilitators and mediators?</p> <p>What costs are involved in delivering planned activities; includes aspects that cost money or time.</p> <p>Will additional resources be needed to undertake monitoring?</p> <p>Include the costs of engagement and dissemination related activities – refer to the suggested media methods in the Kmb and Communication Dissemination column. Some of these activities can be costly, ensure plans and costs will deliver value for money.</p>	<p>How is the research connected to the impact goals?</p> <p>Consider developing a ‘Theory of Change’ diagram as part of the design process. This could be in the form of a logic model to visually describe the impact processes to achieve change.</p> <p>Consider theories relevant to the topic area, the complexity of the intervention and the different stakeholder groups.</p> <p>Do the planned activities demonstrate what will happen at the end of the research project to ultimately achieve impact for the target participants?</p> <p>Identify the specific settings where the findings could be adopted.</p> <p>What are the potential facilitators and barriers to adoption of the findings?</p>	<p>Devise a communication strategy for each stage of the research project - launch, recruitment, delivery, analysis of findings and dissemination of results.</p> <p>What formats and language need to be used for each audience?</p> <p>Utilise relevant communication methods - social media, TV and radio, participant and carer information leaflets, blogs, podcasts, meetings, illustrations, animation and presentations. Think about who will facilitate this – you may need to employ experts to deliver these elements.</p> <p>Could groups (carers/ voluntary) involved indirectly help publicise the research progress and outcomes, who else needs to be involved with dissemination and Kmb.</p> <p>Tailor the choice of academic journals and conferences to the professional audience and tailor outputs for non-academic audiences to match their preferences. Think about when this can be done at relevant stages of the research process.</p> <p>Identify other opportunities to promote knowledge exchange.</p>
<p><a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/corporate/about-health-canada/reports-publications/grants-contributions/knowledge-transfer-planner.html#intro">https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/corporate/about-health-canada/reports-publications/grants-contributions/knowledge-transfer-planner.html#intro</a></p>	<p><a href="http://www.campusengage.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Campus_Engage_Impact_Framework_May_2018_Web.pdf">www.campusengage.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Campus_Engage_Impact_Framework_May_2018_Web.pdf</a></p>	<p><a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/sustainableimprovement/impact-framework/">https://www.england.nhs.uk/sustainableimprovement/impact-framework/</a></p>	<p><a href="http://www.kmbtoolkit.ca/doing">http://www.kmbtoolkit.ca/doing</a></p>	<p><a href="https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/the-mes/impact-evaluation">https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/the-mes/impact-evaluation</a></p>	<p><a href="https://www.health.org.uk/publications/communicating-your-research-a-toolkit">https://www.health.org.uk/publications/communicating-your-research-a-toolkit</a></p>