SPCR Masterclass: Policy Engagement

Dr Jonathan Hammond
SPCR Trainees Event, 18 September 2024

Session aims

1. What and why of policy engagement
2. Share experiences and aspirations
3. Consider how to more effectively engage policy makers with your research findings

My background

- 2009-2011: Research Assistant

- 2011-2015: PhD HSCA2012, CCGs

- 2015-2023: RA/RF (HREP understanding commissioning system; NHS Test Beds…)

- PRUComm / PRU HSSC

- GP Access (NIHR Policy Research Programme)

- Written evidence HCB21, verbal evidence to HoL peers; 2022: verbal evidence to 'Fuller Stocktake', written evidence to HSCSC expert panel on HSC workforce

- Health and Care 2022 Post-Implementation Review

- Course Unit Lead: MPH Introduction to Health Policy

Policy engagement

- (Public / Health) Policy

  - Statement of intent

  - Set of actions (or intentional inaction) to achieve goals/address problems

  - Addressing populations, usually via programmes

- Policy engagement

  - Using academic evidence, expertise, and experience to inform and enhance policy decisions

  - 'Evidence gap' … 'Messiness of reality'

Reflect and discuss

Have you had experiences of sharing research evidence with policy makers? What was it like? Anything surprising, positive, challenging?
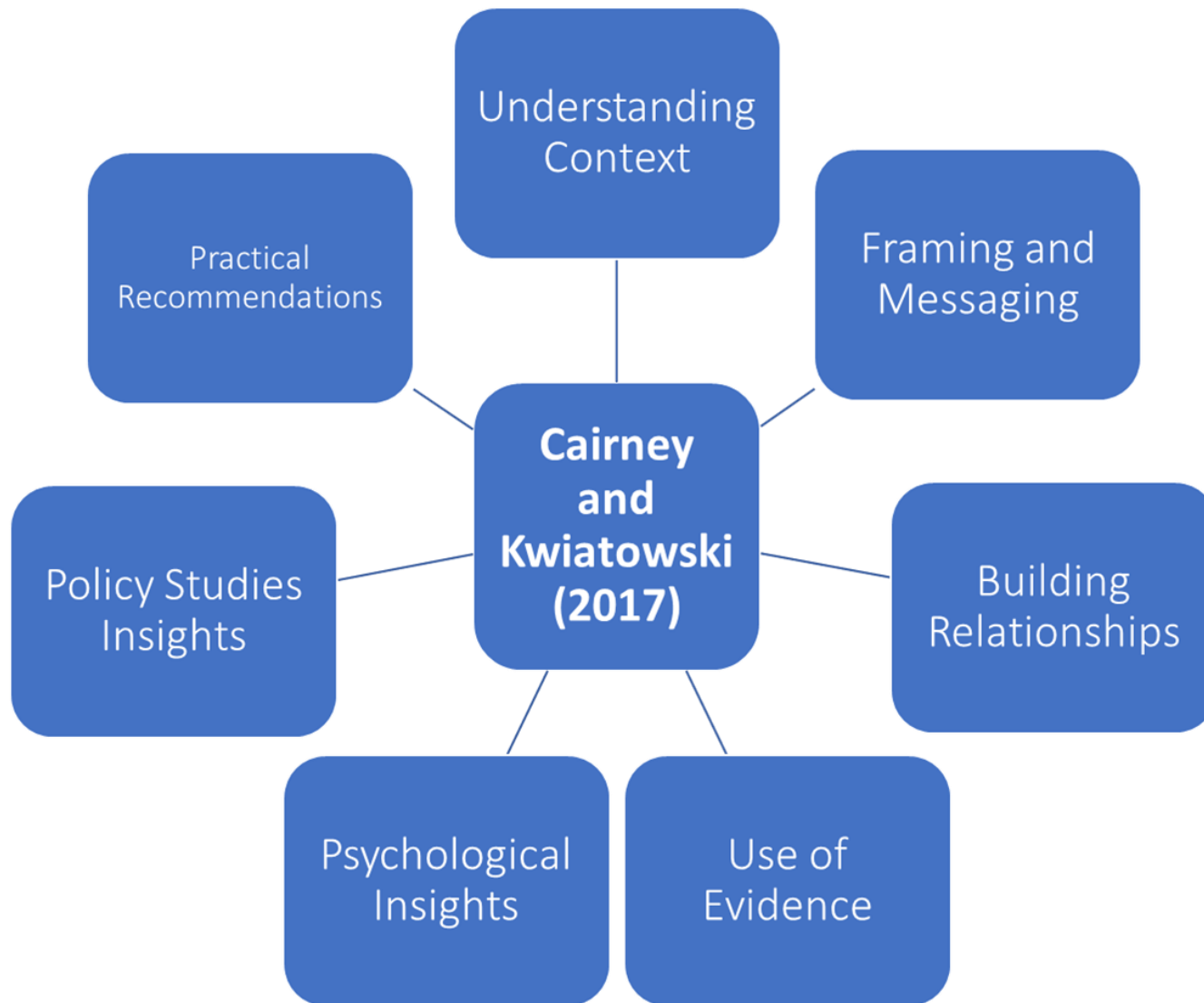
Do you have aspirations to inform policy with your research evidence in the future? Are there particular gaps or aspects that you think need attention?

Is there anything that interests you or puts you off policy engagement?

Oliver and Cairney (2019)… Eight recommendations

(1) Do high quality research;

(2) make your research relevant and readable;

(3) understand policy processes;

(4) be accessible to policymakers: engage routinely, flexible, and humbly;

(5) decide if you want to be an issue advocate or honest broker;

(6) build relationships (and ground rules) with policymakers;

(7) be 'entrepreneurial' or find someone who is; and

(8) reflect continuously: should you engage, do you want to, and is it working?

Cairney and Kwiatkowski (2017).
How to communicate effectively with policymakers.

ICU API (?)

- Intention

- Connecting

- Understanding

- Accessibility

- Politics

- Impact

Intention / Connecting

- Proactivity

- Relationships

- Networks

- Policy engagement support and services (e.g. Policy@Manchester)

Understanding

- Different worlds

- Organisational dynamics

- Career trajectories / staff turnover

- Lack of…

- Timeframes

Accessibility

- You

- Your work

  - Framing

  - Narratives and stories

  - Clarity and simplicity

  - Repetition and reinforcement

  - Feedback mechanisms

Politics

- Socio-political factors / context

    - e.g. GP Access

- Cycles

Capturing impact

- Submit to enquiries

- Ask policy maker contacts

- REF / Impact Officers

Start thinking about this now...

- What is potentially useful about your research?
- Who might benefit from knowing about it?
- Familiar and mundane to you? Not to others!
- Record, capture, share...

- Policy engagement is dynamic, relational, cumulative – multi-dimensional skill

Questions?

Thanks!

jonathan.hammond@manchester.ac.uk

Feel free to get in touch…

References

Cairney, P. and Kwiatkowski, R. (2017). How to communicate effectively with policymakers: combine insights from psychology and policy studies. *Palgrave Communications*, 3(1), pp.1–8.

Cairney, P. and Oliver, K. (2018). How should academics engage in policymaking to achieve impact? *Political Studies Review*.

Oliver, K. and Cairney, P. (2019). The dos and don'ts of influencing policy: a systematic review of advice to academics. *Palgrave Communications*, 5(1), pp.1–11.