Author’s response to reviews

Title: How do third sector organisations use research and other knowledge? A systematic scoping review.

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Dear Prof Signe Flottorp

Thank you again for considering our paper for publication in Implementation Science, and thanks too for the further feedback from the two peer reviewers. We have addressed these below, point by point, and in the manuscript, and look forward to hearing from you again in due course.

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Hardwick
Rob Anderson
Chris Cooper

Referee 1: Anita Kothari

The authors have satisfactorily attended to the peer review feedback.

Referee 2: Robin Miller

The authors have clearly considered the previous reviewers' comments at some length and have responded to these in a constructive and considered manner.

1. Major essential revisions

None

2. Minor essential revisions

I would like to see some expansion of the short overview of the ‘distinctive characteristics’ that are commonly connected with tso’s as this is such a key premise of the article and would seem therefore for a little more considerations.

We agree that it would be useful to expand the overview in the introductory section, and so we have added further detail of the characteristics of TSOs that may affect how and why they mobilise knowledge. That paragraph now reads:

“TSOs are also believed to have particular strengths, relative to public sector organisations. These claimed strengths include: being more client-led and community-led; able to access ‘hard to reach groups’; being responsive to local people; being innovative, builders of social capital and civil participation; more cost-effective, and; more approachable and less threatening as service providers[1-4] Many of these strengths and differences are embedded in the way they work (person centred, participatory, flexible). As knowledge mobilisation is increasingly regarded as an inherently social process [5, 6], affected by contextual enablers and constraints, it is likely that these particular strengths and differences will affect how and why they mobilise knowledge in their work. For instance, TSOs tend to work with whole communities, whose needs are diverse and so research evidence which is narrowly focused on a particular intervention at a particular point in time, may have less meaning and utility than other ways of knowing (such as peer to peer learning, ‘borrowing
ideas’ from other organisations, or using staff and service users’ tacit knowledge).” (Page 4, paragraph 2).

3. Discretionary reviews

For future research to consider the differences within the third sector in relation to size and scope as well as areas of work. Social enterprise would be another interesting group of organisations to include in this.

We agree that future research could include exploring the impact of size, scope and remit on knowledge mobilisation, as well as social enterprises as a group of organisations worthy of further investigation in how they use research and other knowledge. This is now reflected in the ‘Future Research’ part of the discussion, and reads:

“The organisations in the studies included in this review varied too, in terms of size, remit, staffing structure, and future research could consider what impact these differences may have on how research and other knowledge gets mobilised. Future research could also consider investigating research use amongst social enterprises that provide healthcare services, and in particular how ex-NHS provider services that have become social enterprises approach research use. If knowledge mobilisation is an inherently cultural process, contrasting an ex-NHS culture against a general charity may provide useful insights into why being a third sector organisation influences knowledge and research use.” (Page 22, paragraph 1).