

KNOWLEDGE MOBILISATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

UoN Annual Research Conference

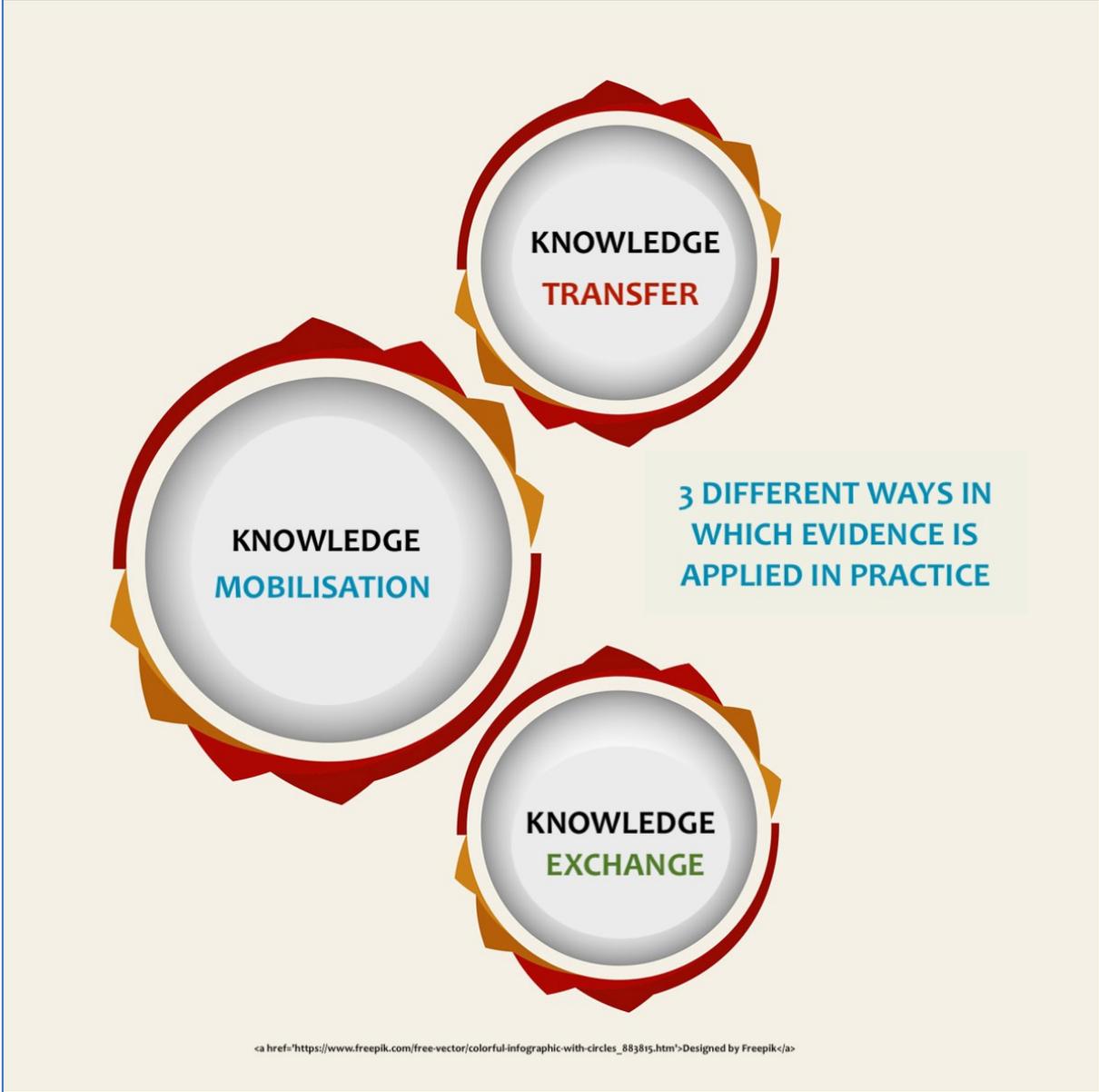
20-21 June 2019

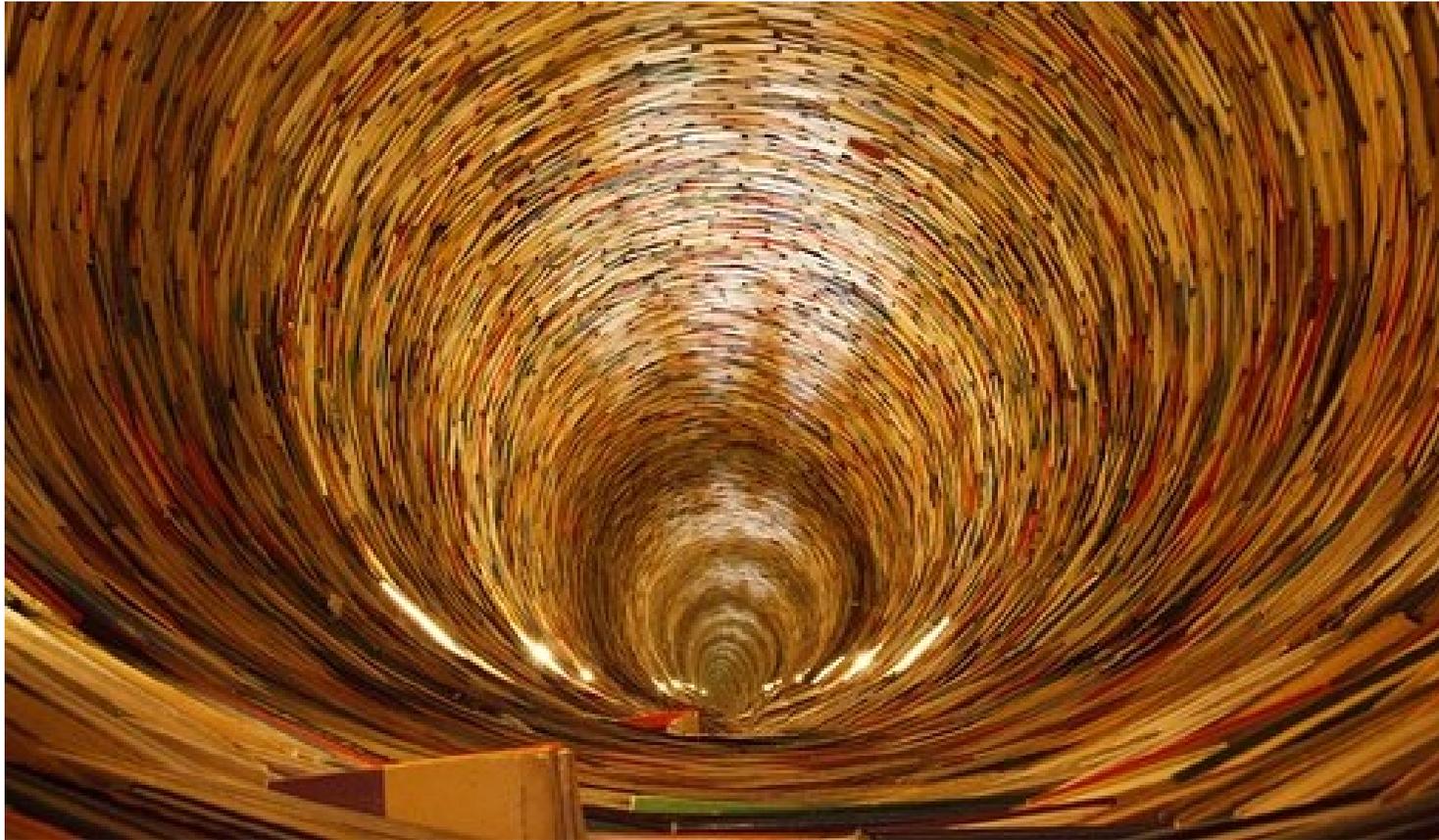


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The contribution of research



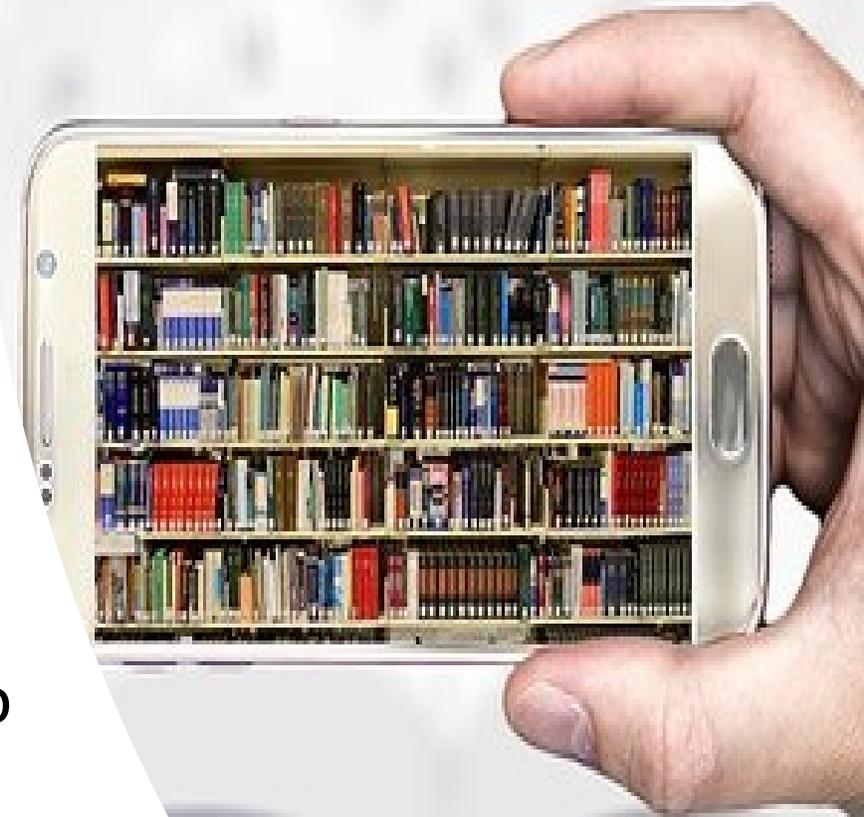


Knowledge Mobilization (KMb): a two-way process that makes use of the existing stock of knowledge and co-creates new knowledge to help foster change. The term KMb is most used by the Canadian network Research Impact, which helps translate/transfer university-based knowledge to help citizen groups' (Shaxcson, et al. (2012: 2)

What is Knowledge Mobilisation?

Argument

- The role that universities, and academics in particular, have so far played in producing knowledge has been under attack for being obsolete, not accessible, marred by debates on the quality of the evidence, and of little practical use.
- Traditional means of knowledge production are also seen as not being 'value for money'
- Debate of how to measure and value what universities as a whole contribute to society rages on





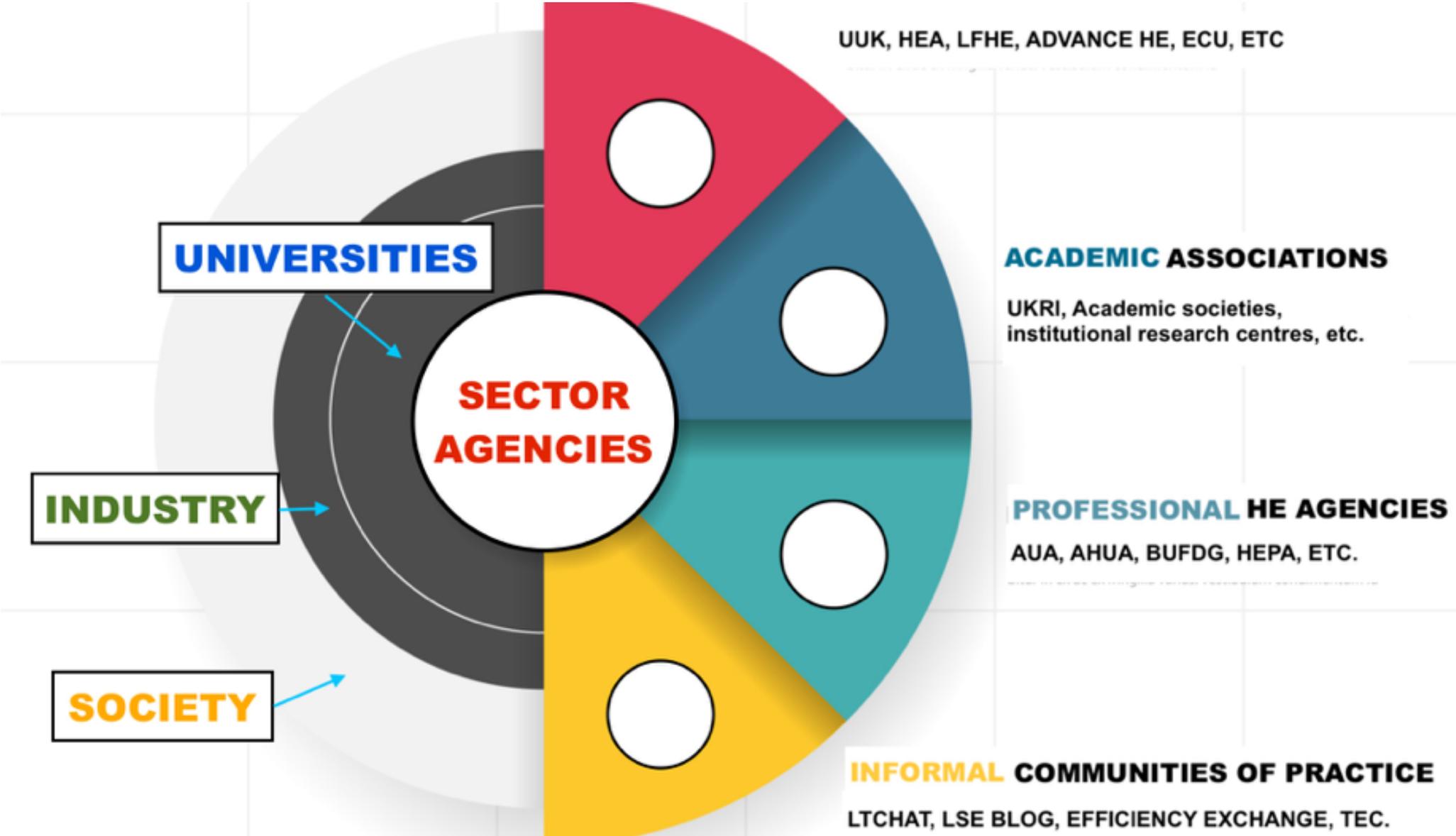
What Works Centres: generating better evidence

Established to:

- help decision-makers to make decisions based on evidence
- Help the health sector, among others, to set ‘benchmark for standards of evidence and held up as the direction in which social policy should move’ (Cabinet Office, 2013b).
- Identify cost-effective policies and practices
- Currently 7 What Works Centres and 2 associated centres
- **Evaluating the impact of KMb activities is complex and maybe, paradoxically, still lacking clear evidence of what works**

DOES HIGHER EDUCATION NEED A ‘WHAT WORKS CENTRE’?

HE Agencies: The sector's diversity



Methodology

- February and April 2018 during a time of great change for the Higher Education (HE) sector in England
- Data gathered the views and practice of respondents in **16 higher education (HE) agencies** through ten in-depth semi-structured interviews and two focus groups

Who to participate?

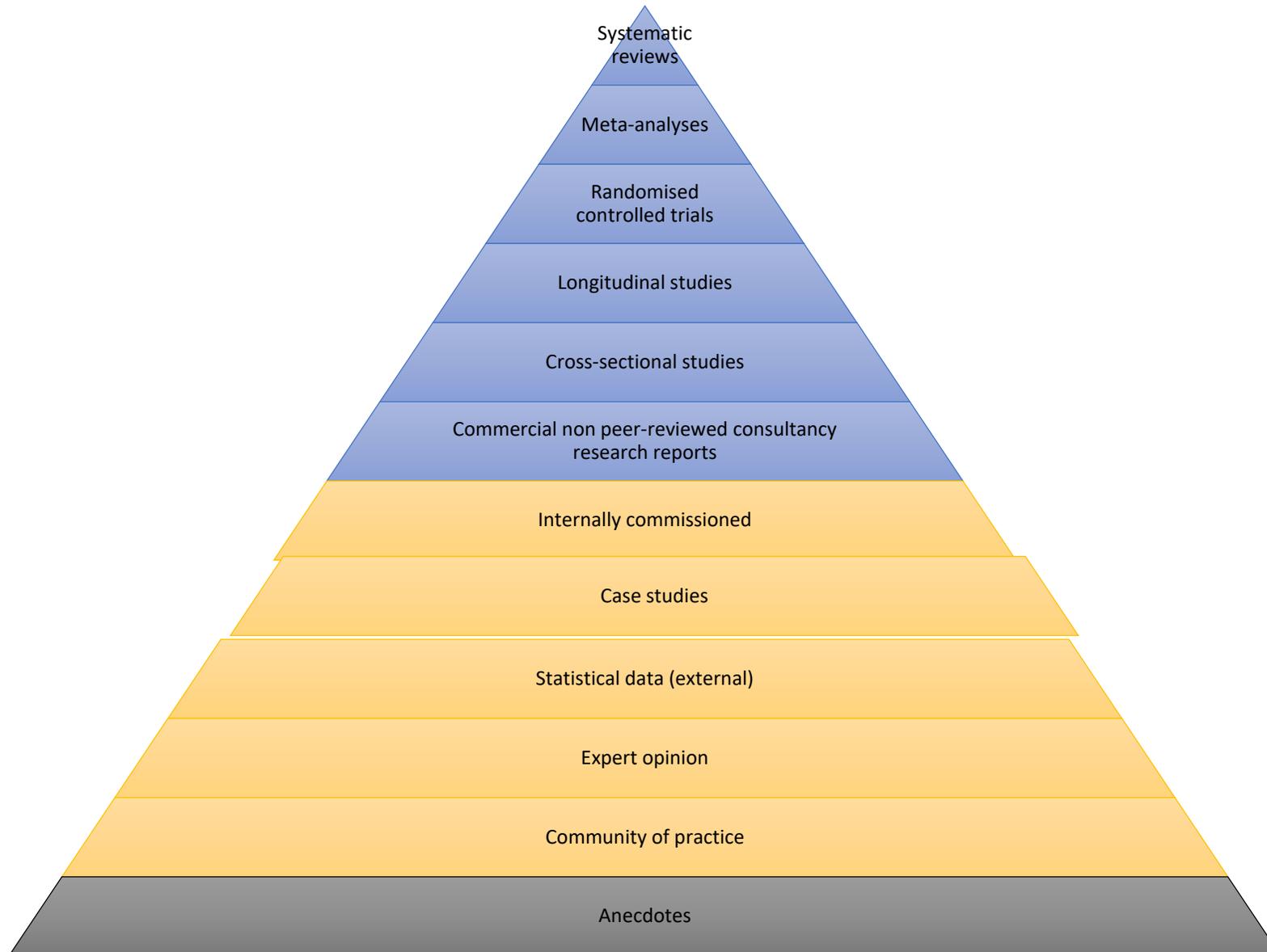
- Leaders and decision-makers can be found at all levels of an institution although the decisions to be made vary according to the role and responsibility of the decision maker (Devecchi et al, 2018)



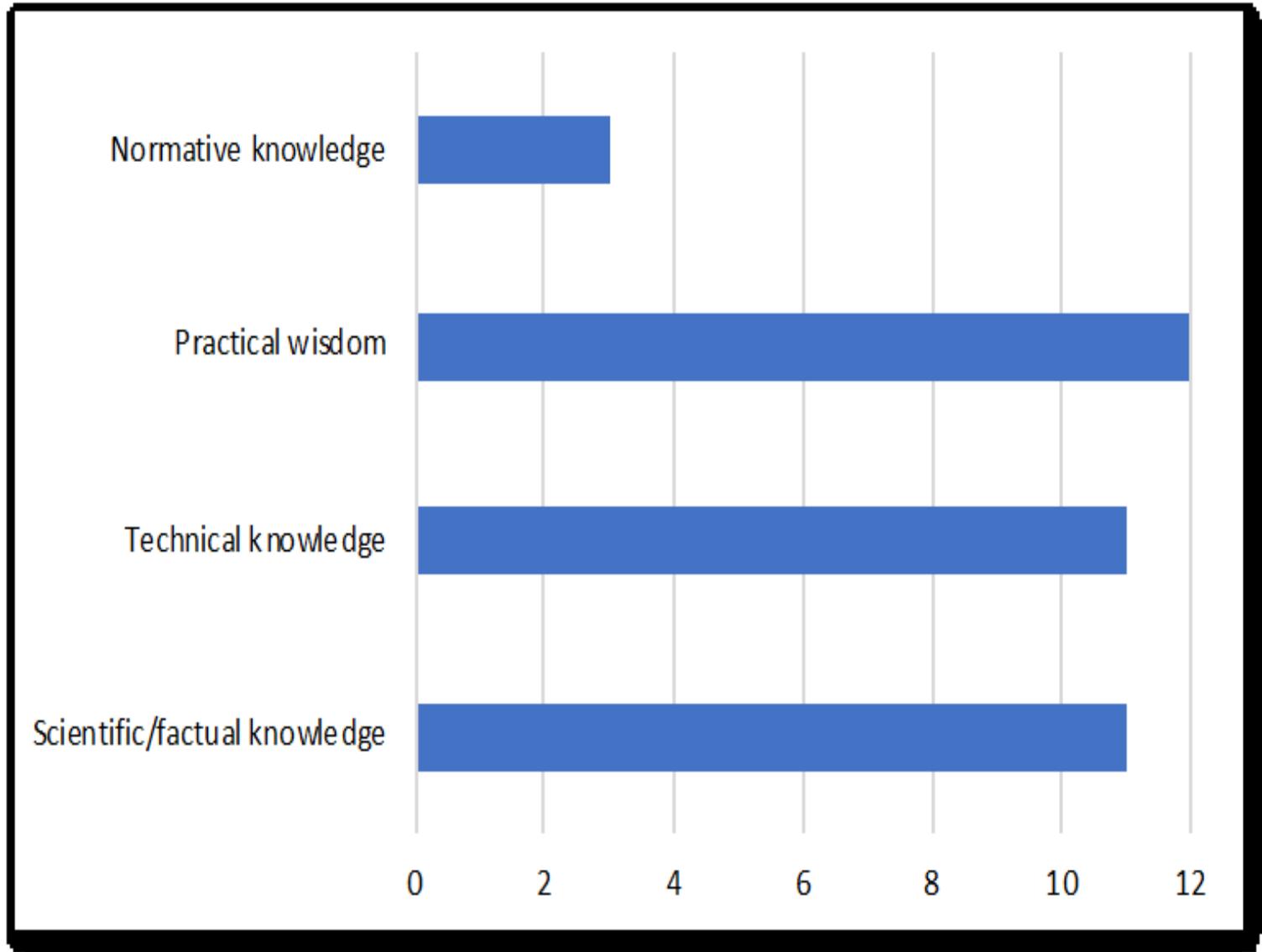
Findings

- HE agencies, that took part in the rapid review, are actively involved in different types of knowledge production processes, such as dissemination, training events, and publications in the forms of reports and guidelines
 - Communication and exchange of knowledge between professional agencies and academics does not seem to be strong and in some cases, academics are at best producers of commissioned knowledge rather than active participants
- The lack of consensual definition and understanding of KMb, a possible overlap with knowledge transfer and knowledge exchange activities
- There does not seem to be a single mechanism that stands out as uniquely successful. Rather, agencies make use of a variety of means to procure the knowledge
- There was more limited evidence of long-term structured impact assessment strategies on the effectiveness of the KMb practices.

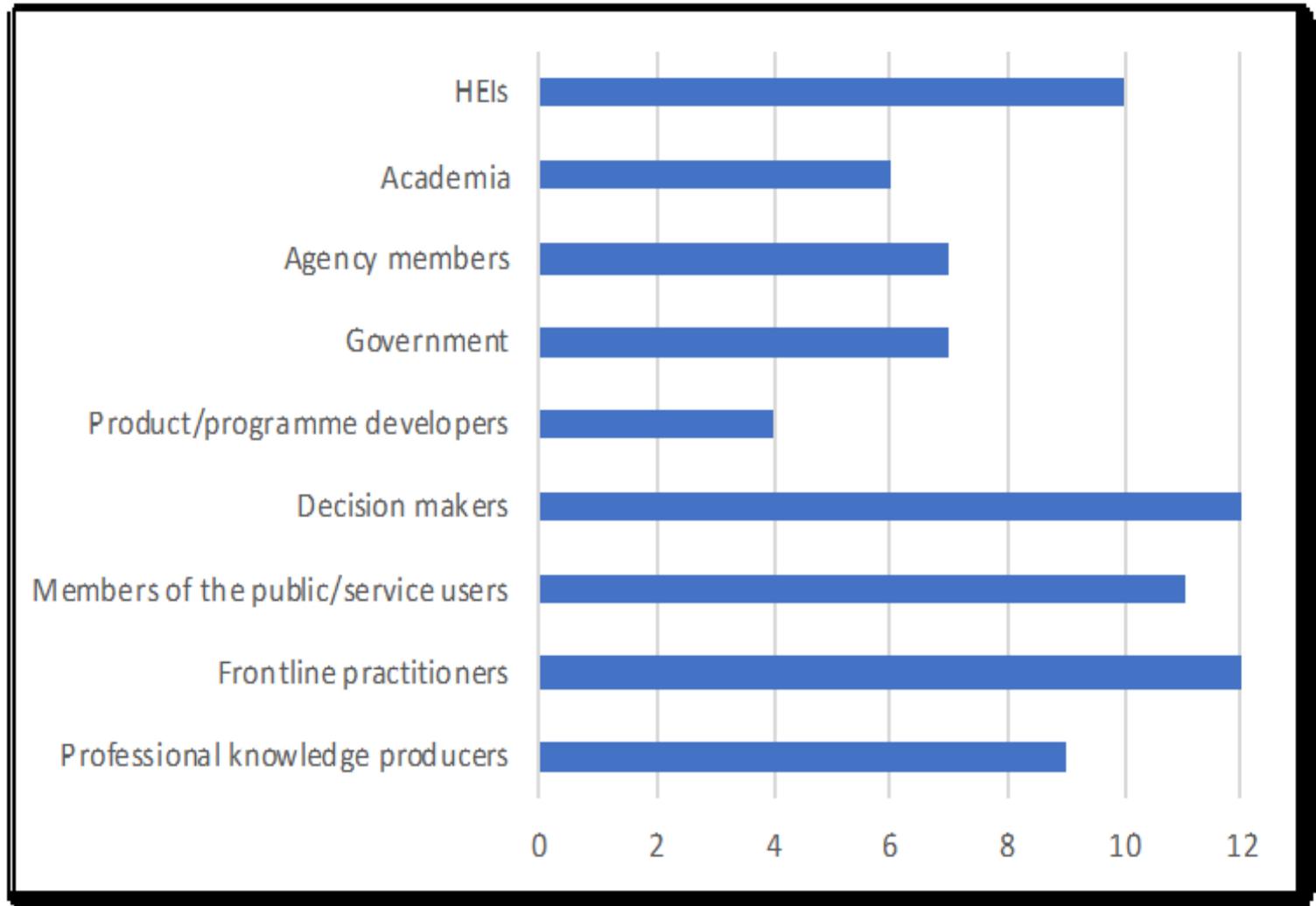
Revised evidence framework



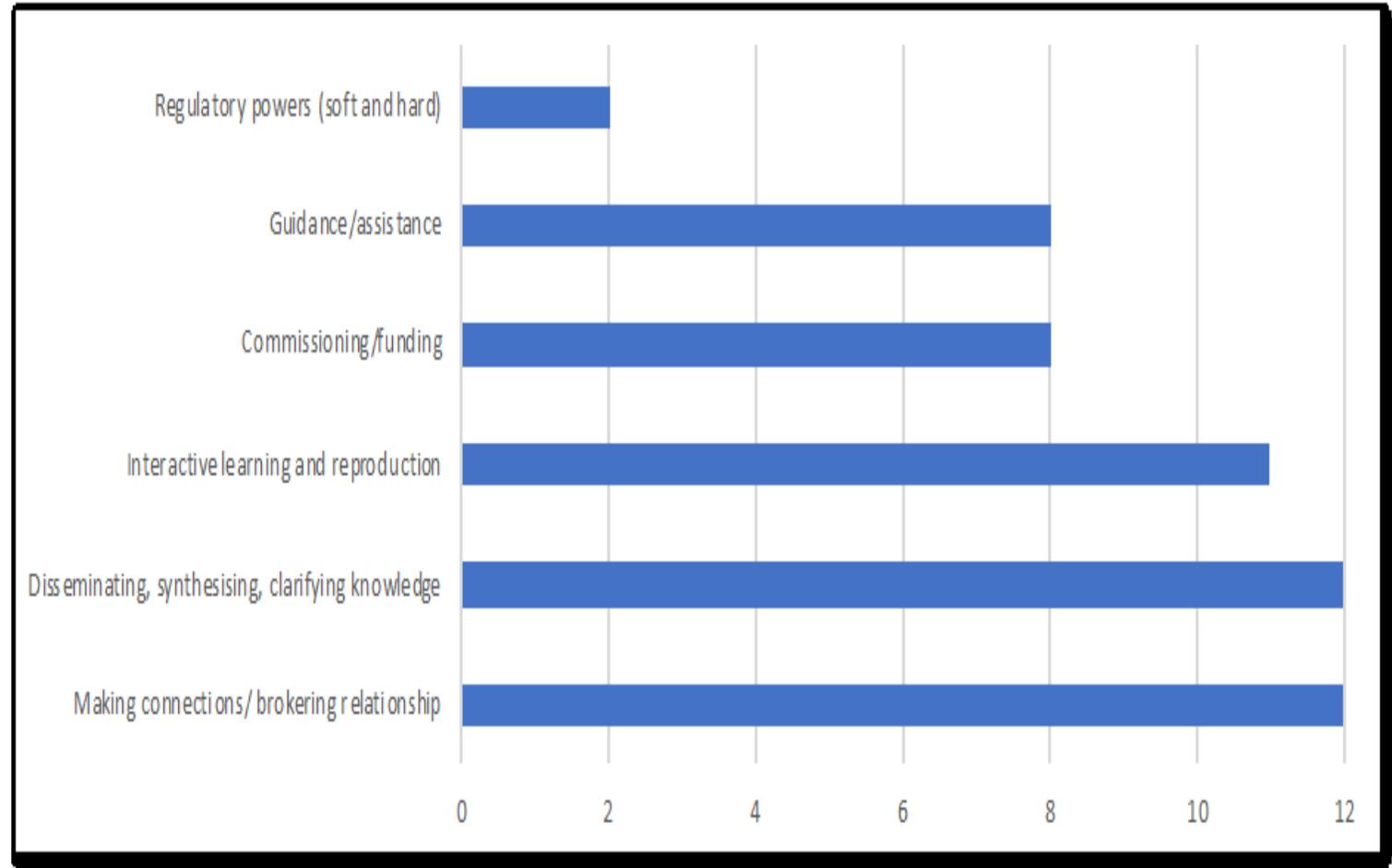
WHAT
knowledge is
mobilised



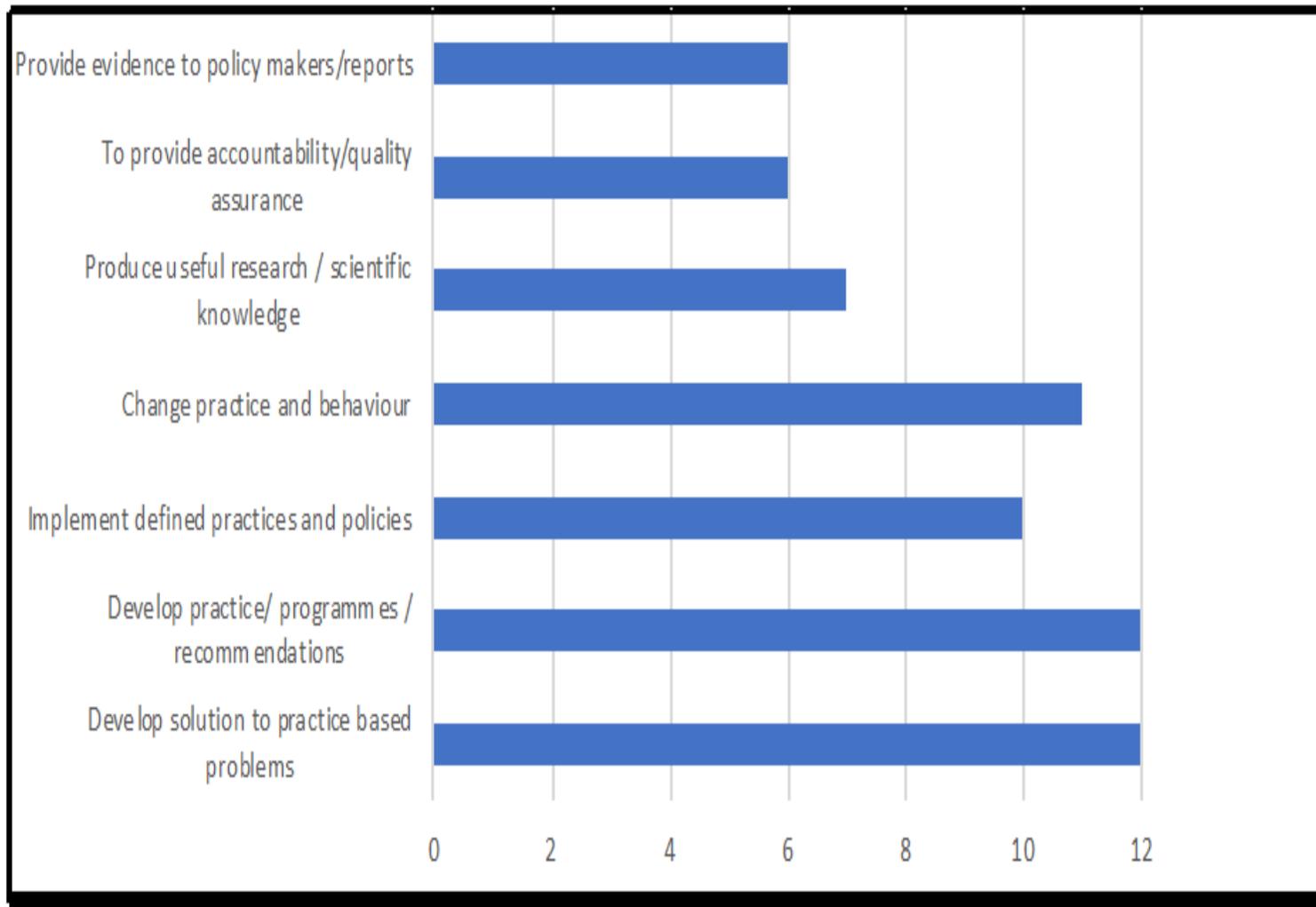
WHOSE
knowledge is
mobilised



HOW
knowledge is
mobilised



WHY
knowledge is
mobilised



Findings

- *‘to look at how they can get better at adopting evidence-based practice, basically, to inform decision making. And that’s decision-making right through the institution. It’s not at the top or people making decisions every day at an operational level. It’s supporting that chain of decision making’ (AD)*
- *‘I think my experience of joining the HE sector is that a lot of - no, not a lot of - some of the associations are very closed doors’ (AF,4)*
- *‘WWC-HE will only succeed if it’s got strong political backing, there is money behind it and it’s got clout. [...] because I think unless you’ve got a bit of a ‘burning platform’ and a real political imperative and the need for things to change quite significantly, then I think it will just – it will not get the traction that it needs (AD)’*

Recommendations

- Develop a common KMb-focused language and understanding
- Join up efforts of agencies' current activities
- Develop the role of knowledge mobilisers
- Support a focused commissioning of research

