

Policy influence in researchfish®



Introduction

- ▶ Why did we do this?
 - Aim to improve both data and its use
 - Context
- ▶ What did we find?
 - Data description
 - Quantitative and qualitative analysis
- ▶ What next?
 - Conclusions
 - Next steps

Challenges of data quality and use:

‘Capacity and capability of research funders and HEIs will need to be developed to analyse the data in Researchfish’

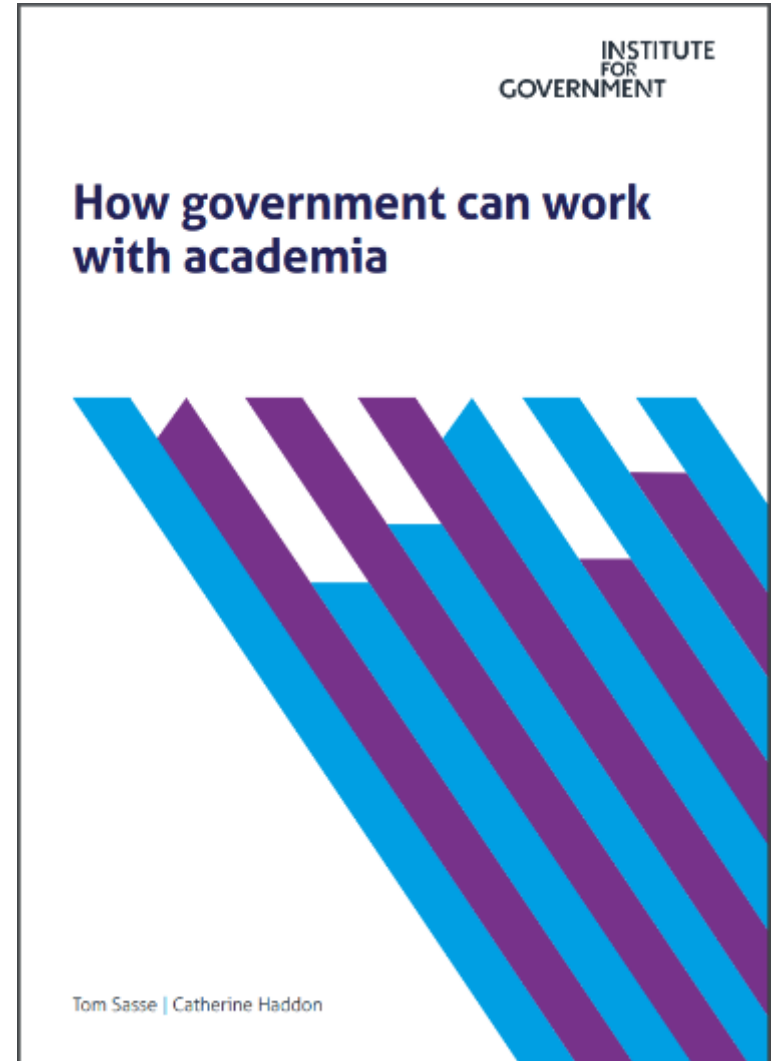
‘Data integrity and quality will need to be continually improved and maintained’

<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/policy-institute/publications/Researchfish%20A%20forward%20look.pdf>



‘The UK Government currently spends £9 billion a year funding academic research. The UK has 30 of the top 200 universities in the world and is home to leading academics in virtually all disciplines. Many of those academics work on areas directly relevant to public policy. But ... [t]oo often, the use of academic evidence and expertise in forming policy is inconsistent and ad hoc’

<https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publications/how-government-can-work-academia>



‘[A]nalysis of the impact case studies from the 2014 REF ...show that Parliament is thought (by the submitting academics) to be an important beneficiary of research, with 20% of cases claiming substantive engagement with Parliament ...

‘Our findings suggest that academic research is not cutting through; for example, the voluntary sector outperforms the higher education sector in terms of written and oral evidence submissions to committees in Parliament. Academic research was criticised for being submitted too late (or not at all) to be influential in parliamentary processes. Academic sources of research were also criticised for being poorly presented with overly technical jargon, and hence for taking too much time to digest. Underlying these problems is a limited understanding among academics of how Parliament operates.’

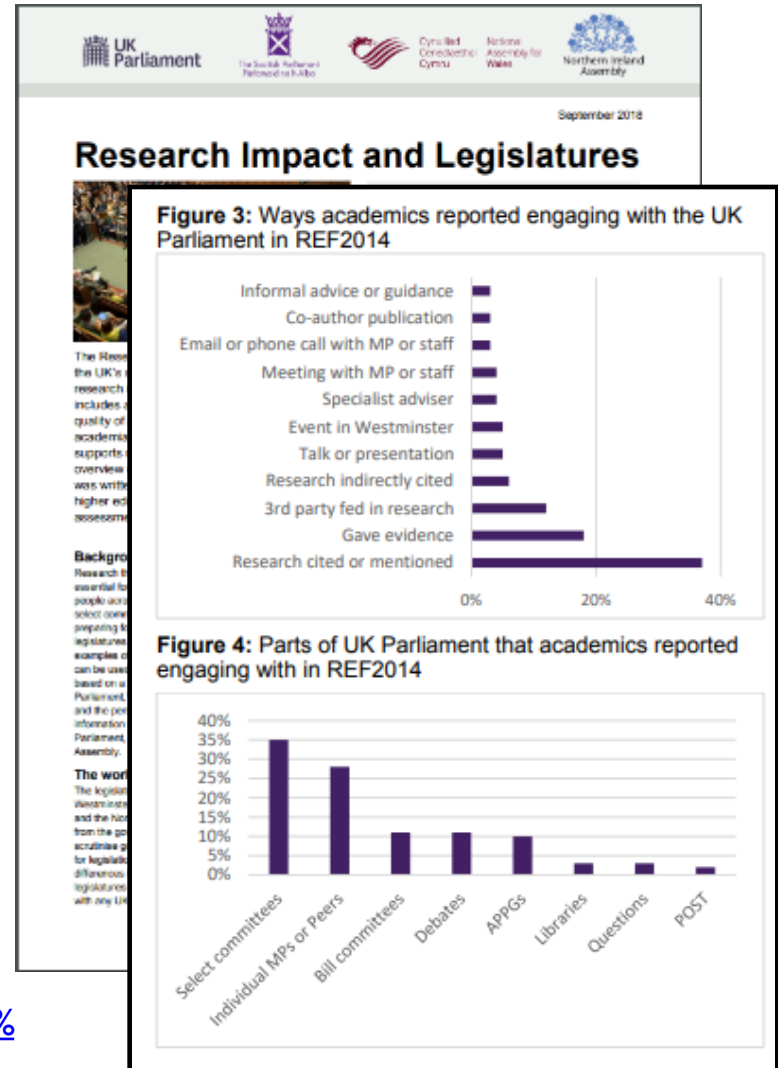
<https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/offices/bicameral/post/work-programme/evaluating-the-use-of-evidence/>



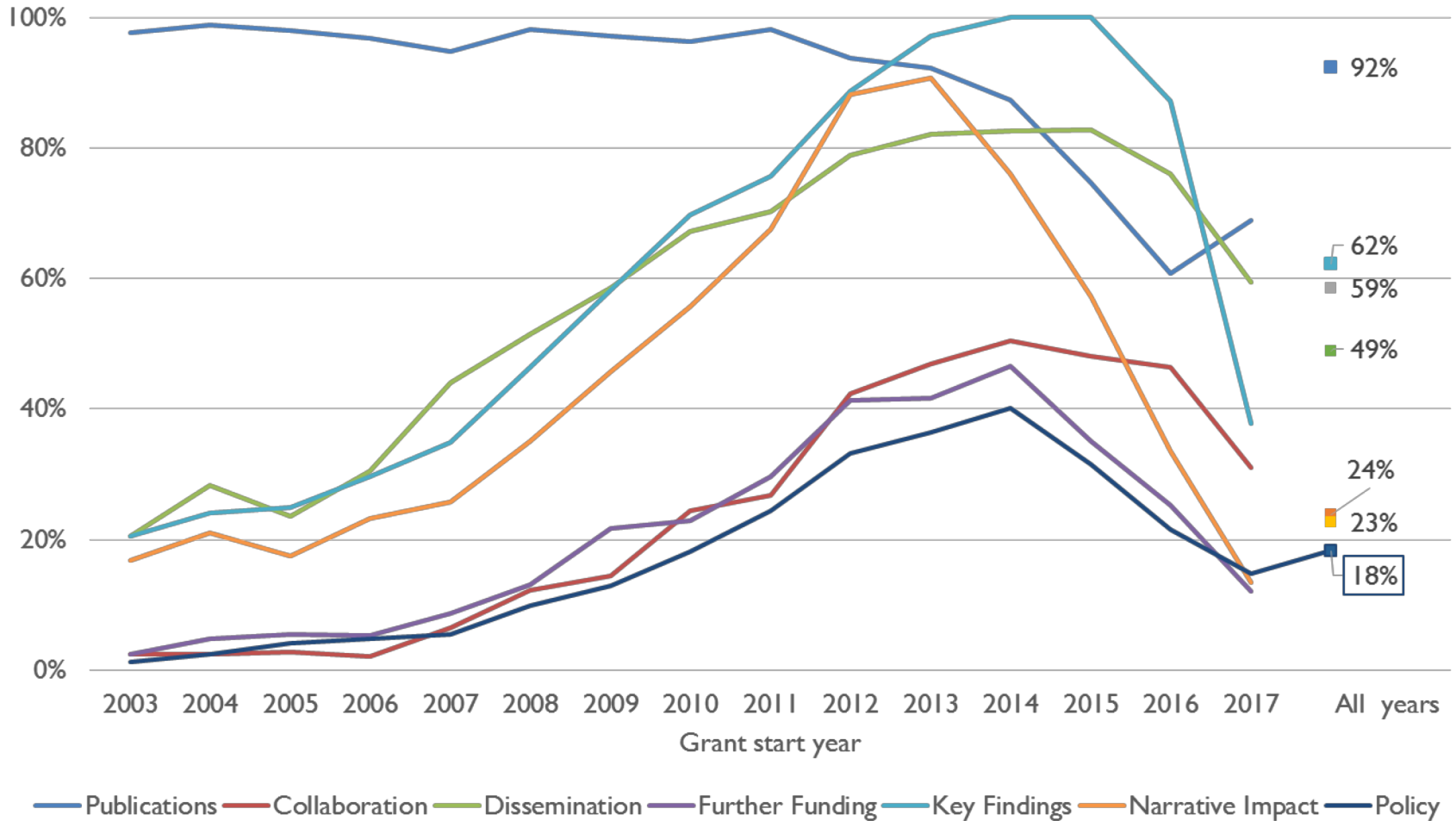
‘Evidence to demonstrate impact: ...

- ▶ *citations of research in parliamentary publications ... implicit references ... use of similar language...*
- ▶ *appointment as an Adviser ... a secondment or placement..*
- ▶ *numbers [and] feedback from participants or attendees...*
- ▶ *working relationships with Members or staff ... meetings held ... working groups, co-authoring...*
- ▶ *press or social media data*
- ▶ *acknowledgements to researchers on webpages, reports or briefings ...*
- ▶ *conversations with people within and outside legislatures ... testimonials from Members, committees or officials ...*
- ▶ *Analysis by third-party organisations of parliamentary proceedings or processes, for example studies of the passage of particular pieces of legislation’.*

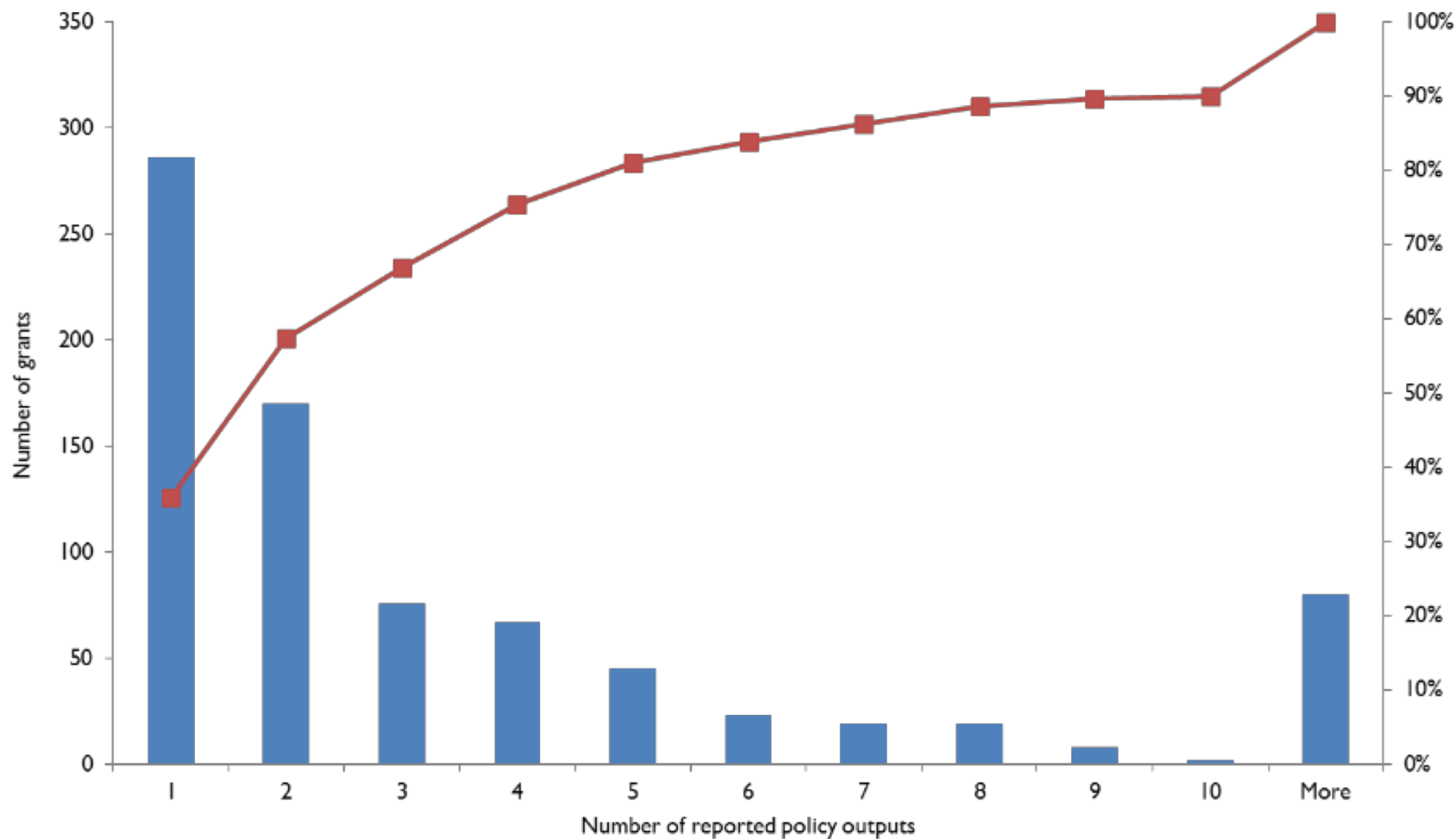
https://www.parliament.uk/documents/Research%20Impact%20in%20Legislatures_FINAL%202.pdf



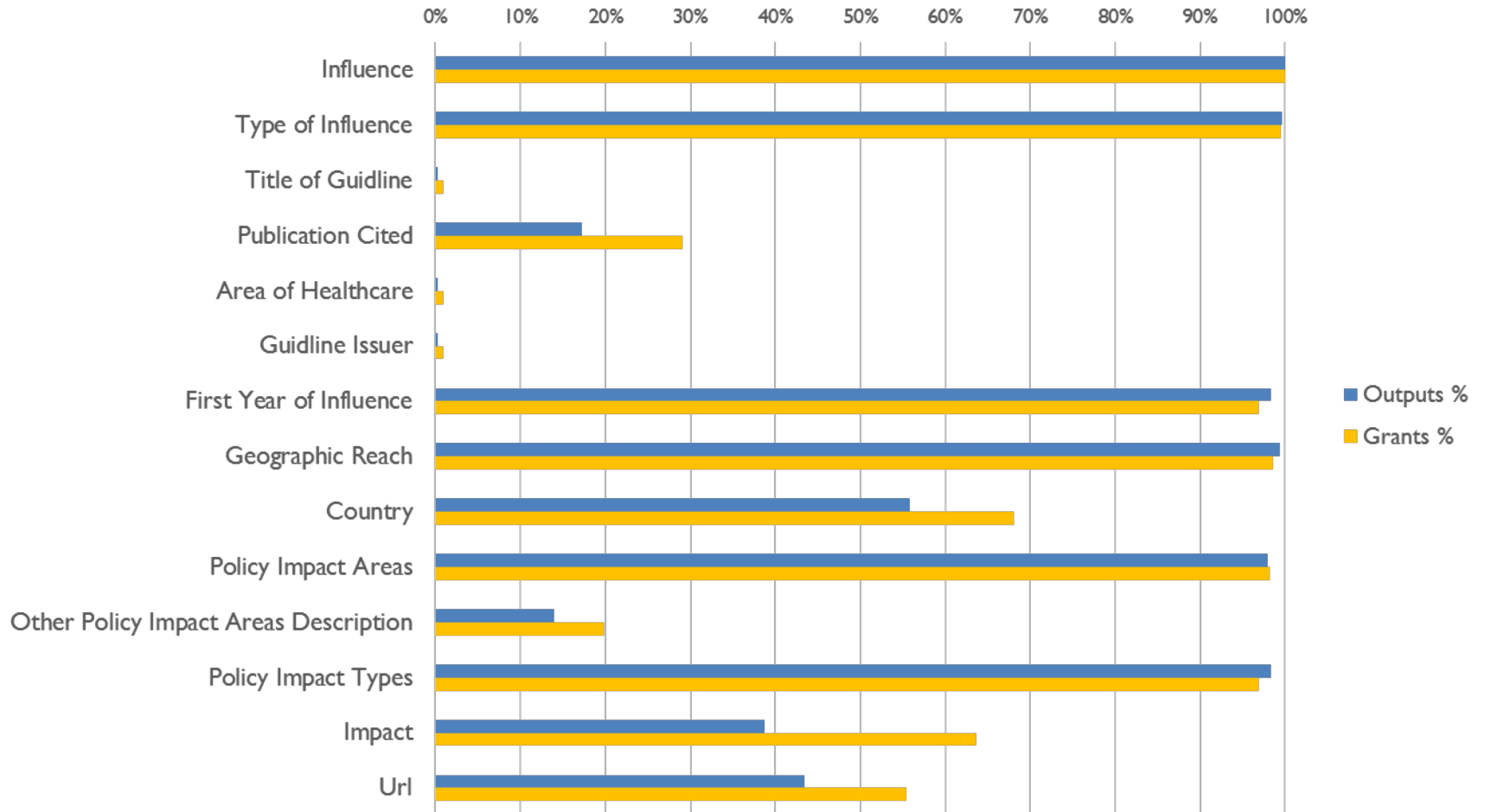
Grants reporting one or more output by type (n=4597 grants)



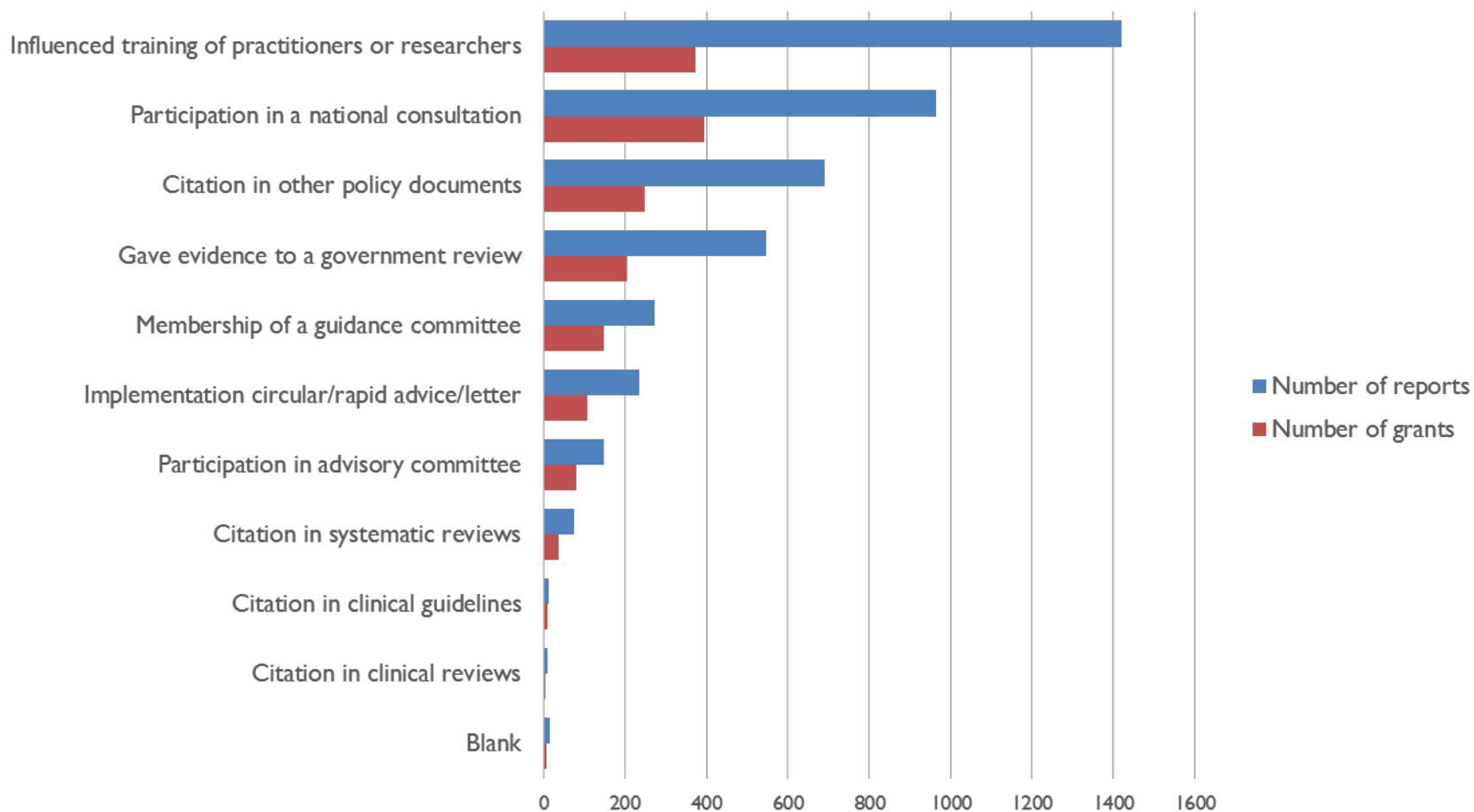
Histogram of reported policy influence (n=842 grants)



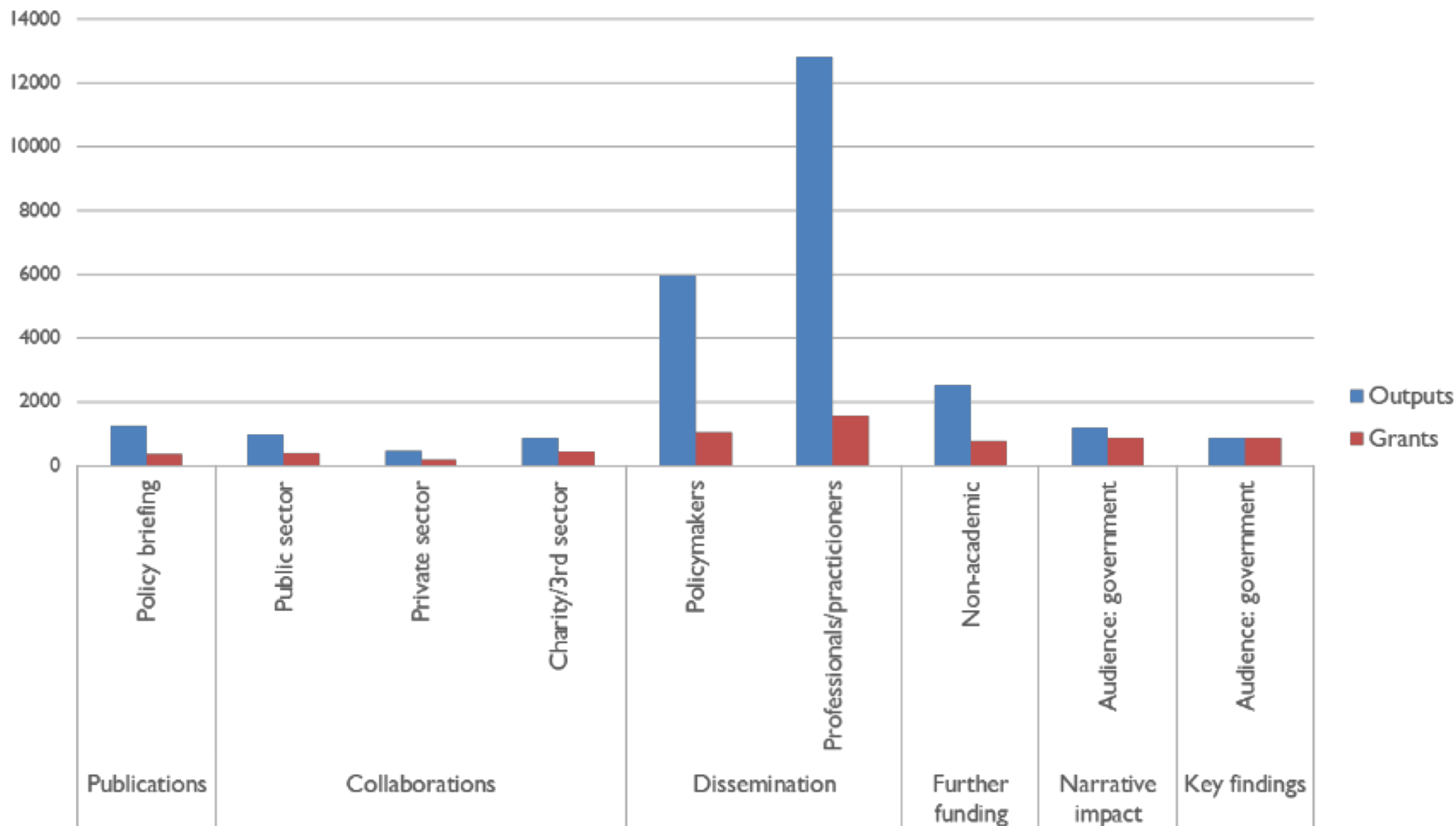
Policy influence record coverage



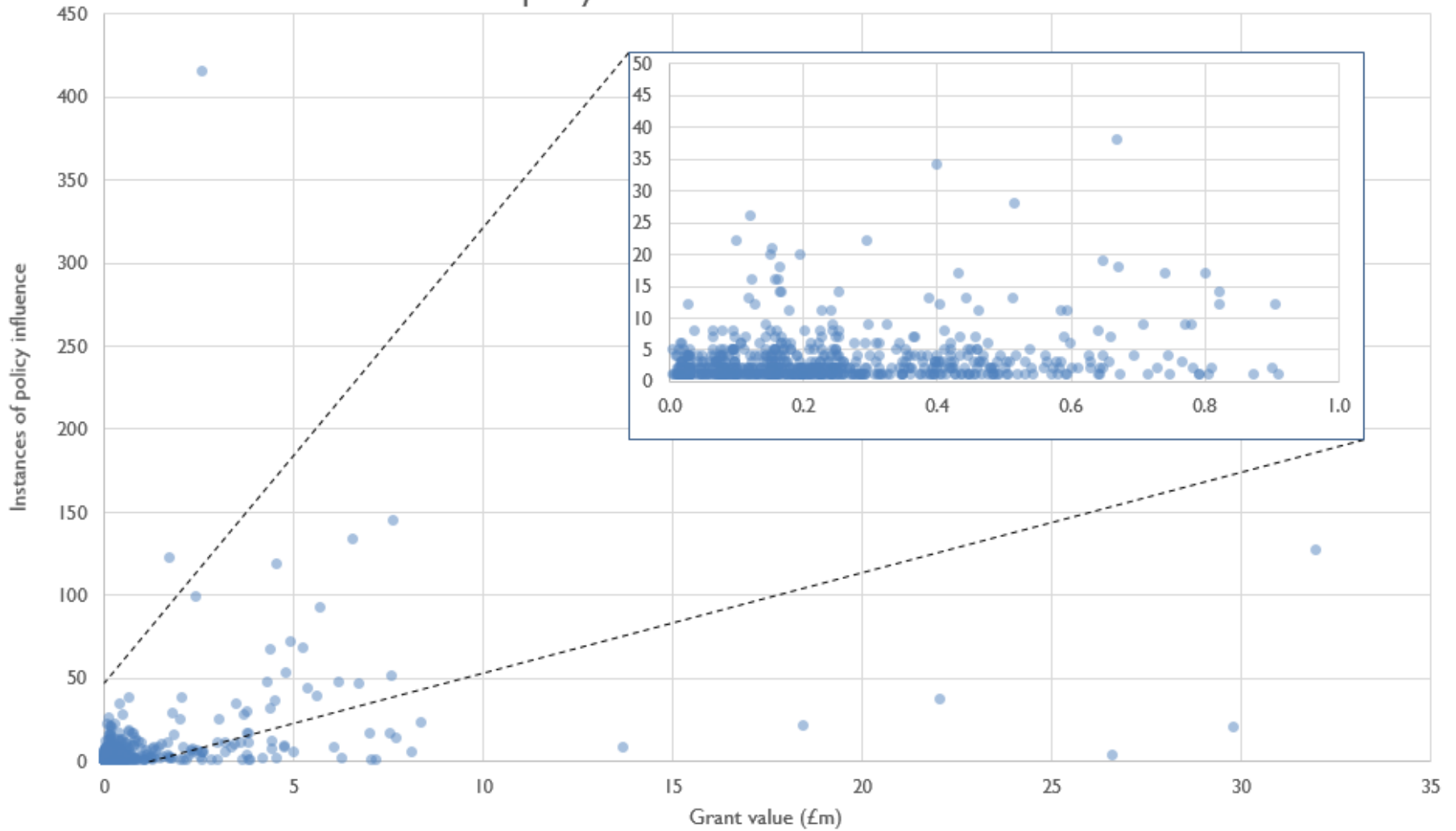
Reported policy influences by type (n=4389 reports/842 grants)



Policy relevant outputs in other fields



How is policy influence related to award value?



Initial conclusions and next steps

- ▶ Evidence of high quality policy influence
- ▶ Need to understand the data
- ▶ Quality and coverage is variable
- ▶ Variation in outcomes *and* reporting behaviour
- ▶ Similar outputs reported in different and/or duplicate ways
- ▶ Resources and priority attached to recording and reporting outcomes vary significantly
- ▶ Next steps:
 - Further quantitative and qualitative analysis
 - Improving data e.g. guidance and engagement
 - Improving use e.g. tools and user guides

Economic and Social Research Council

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Thank you

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