

# Local Authority Champions of Research (LACoR)

Developing Local Authority Champions of Research  
through an embedded research culture:  
a proof of concept study

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# Introducing the LACoR team

Mandy Cheetham

Clare Humble

Sam Redgate

Laura Ritson

Peter Van der Graaf



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Mauricio Jordan De Souza Coelho | Dreamstime.com

Ashley Adamson

Eugene Milne

Frank Kee

Kevin Heaney

Paul Roderick

Jason Horsley

Sallie Bacon

Helen Walters

Harry Rutter

Mark Tully

Ruth Hunter

# Background

- Transition of public health to local government: new challenges and opportunities for evidence use
- Austerity and public sector funding cuts: less resources for evaluation / reduced capacity / increased pressures to spend wisely
- Renewed focus on prevention and the wider determinants of health: need for new methodological approaches

 **How to embed a research culture in local government?**

*Research culture: a system which facilitates transdisciplinary working and harnesses broadest range of types of evidence for LA decision-making to improve health*

# Methods

## WORK PACKAGE 1

Review of embedded research models in local government

- Rapid literature review (21 articles included)
- Online survey of approaches/ practices to facilitate research use (n=8)

## WORK PACKAGE 2

Developing a prototype logic model

- 3 facilitated workshops in Newcastle, Belfast, Southampton with PHP and commissioners to draft logic model (n=54)

## WORK PACKAGE 3

Refining the model

- Follow-up workshop in Newcastle
- Qualitative interviews in Newcastle City Council (n=14) to explore how to embed a research culture

## WORK PACKAGE 4

Learning from an embedded researcher: a case study

- Ongoing with embedded researcher recruited for Well Newcastle Gateshead

## WORK PACKAGE 5

Feasibility testing of evaluation approaches:

- Complex system mapping at Belfast workshop
- Social Network Analysis survey with workshop participants

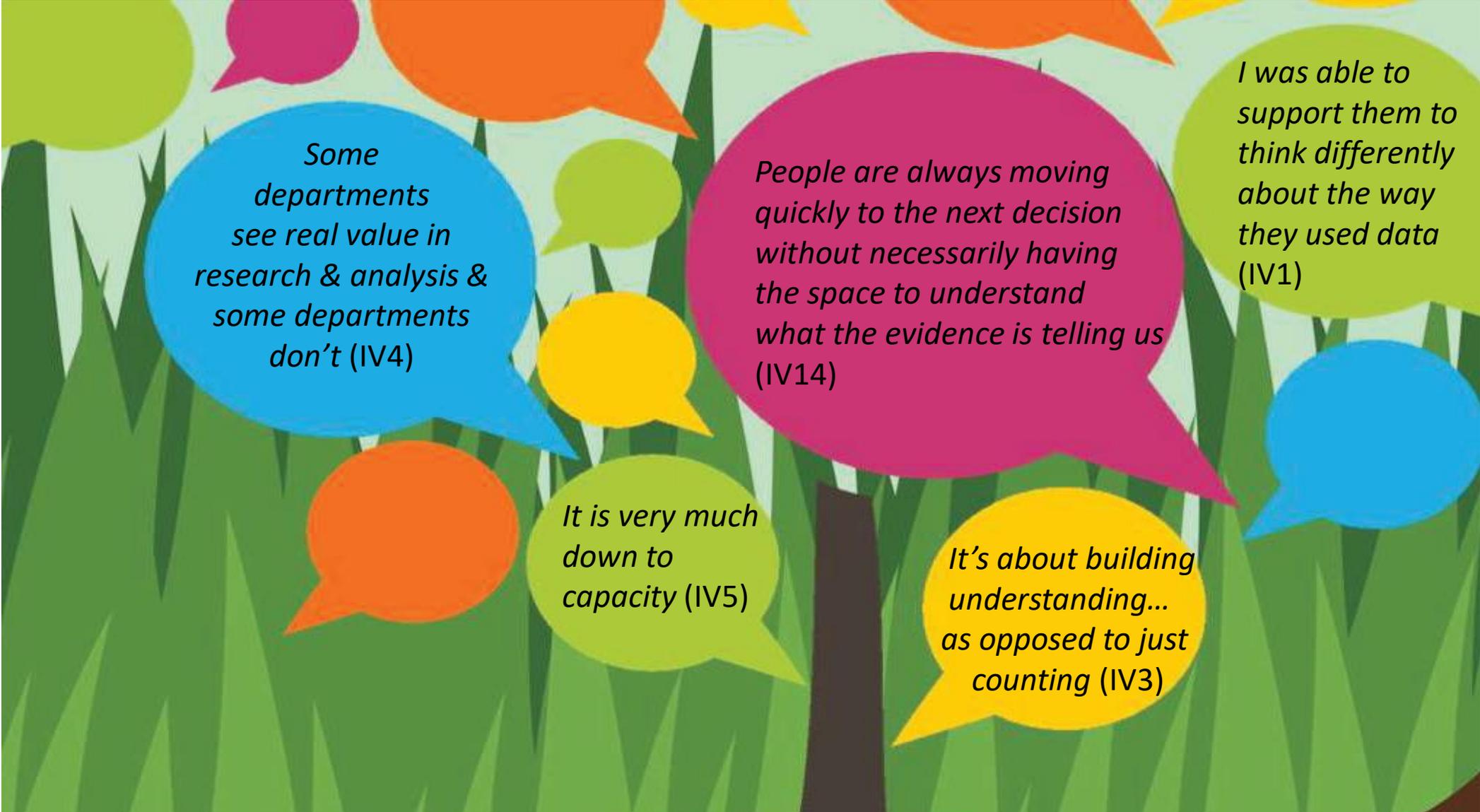
# Main findings from rapid review of literature

- Multiple types of evidence valued differently (Oliver and de Voght 2017)
- Disconnect between policy makers and academics (Kneale et al 2017)
- Understanding of context / focus on how evidence produced locally (Gavens et al 2016)
- Public health shaped by political and legal constraints (Sanders et al 2017)
- Involvement of elected members required (Curtis et al 2018)
- Personal contacts and trusting relationships crucial (Wilkinson et al 2012)

## References:

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# Quotes from LA interviewees



*Some departments see real value in research & analysis & some departments don't (IV4)*

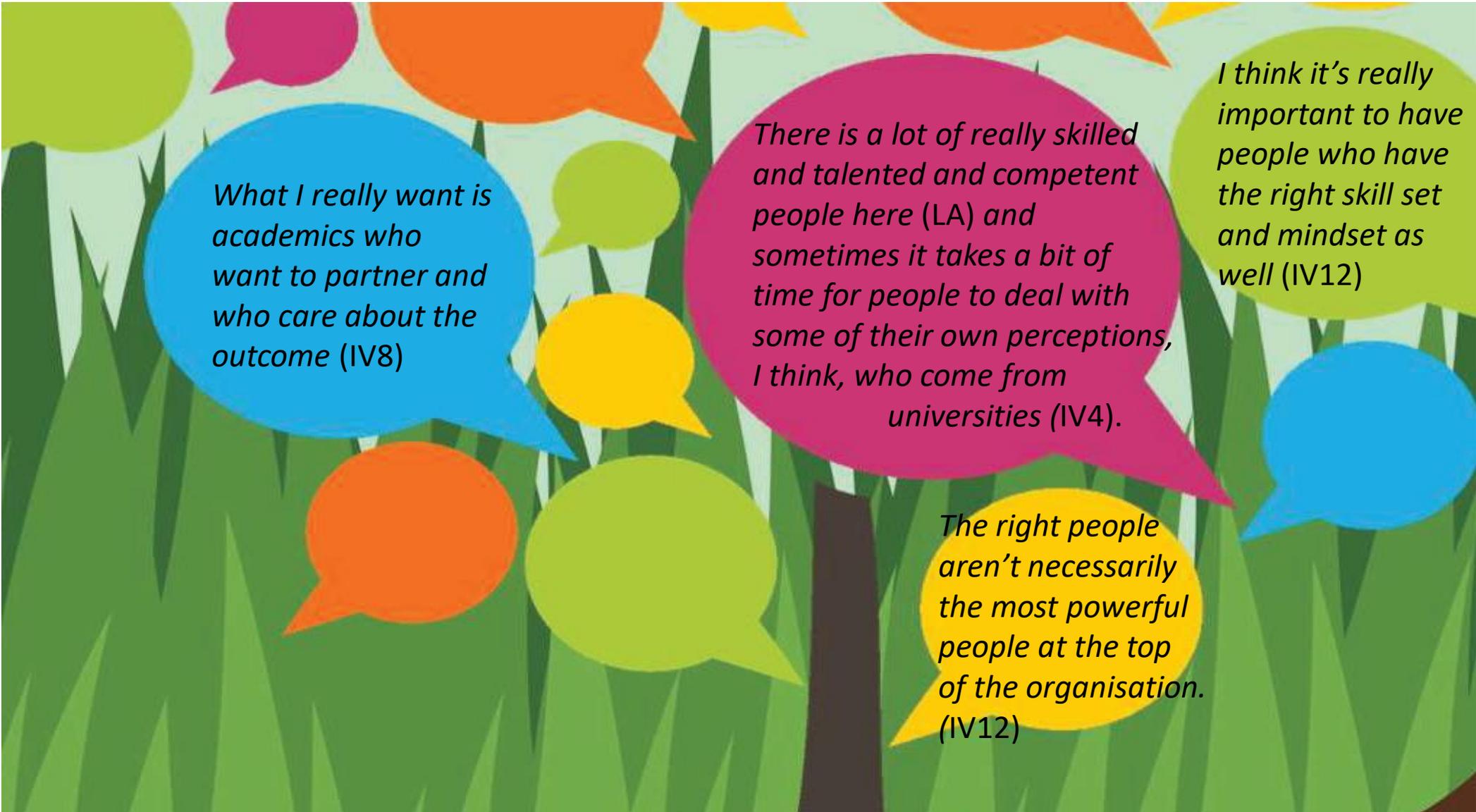
*People are always moving quickly to the next decision without necessarily having the space to understand what the evidence is telling us (IV14)*

*I was able to support them to think differently about the way they used data (IV1)*

*It is very much down to capacity (IV5)*

*It's about building understanding... as opposed to just counting (IV3)*

# Quotes from LA interviewees



*What I really want is academics who want to partner and who care about the outcome (IV8)*

*There is a lot of really skilled and talented and competent people here (LA) and sometimes it takes a bit of time for people to deal with some of their own perceptions, I think, who come from universities (IV4).*

*I think it's really important to have people who have the right skill set and mindset as well (IV12)*

*The right people aren't necessarily the most powerful people at the top of the organisation. (IV12)*