Implementing a Strategic Approach to Workplace Wellbeing Before, During and After the Crisis

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Acknowledgements

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Multiple systematic reviews

> 150 interviews in >20 organisations – on-going

Analyses of large scale databases – on-going

c. 25 collaborators at UEA, RAND, Sheffield, Reading, Essex, Sussex, Swansea
+ Strathclyde, Aston, Cardiff, Ulster, Sheffield, Nottingham

FORMAT

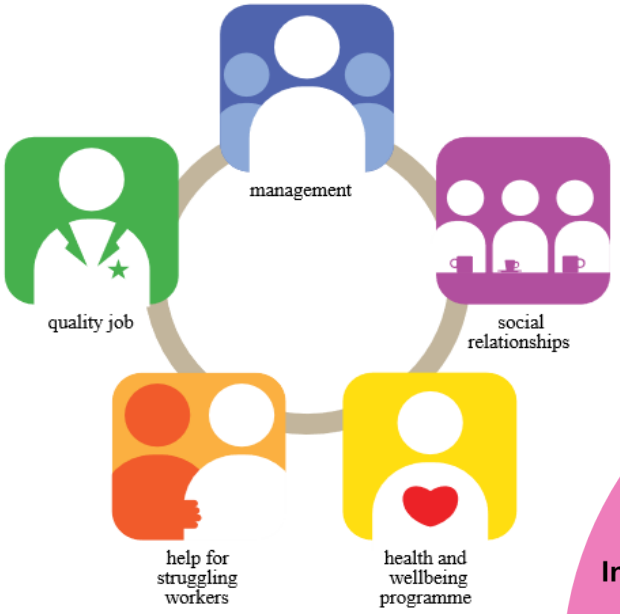
What & Why

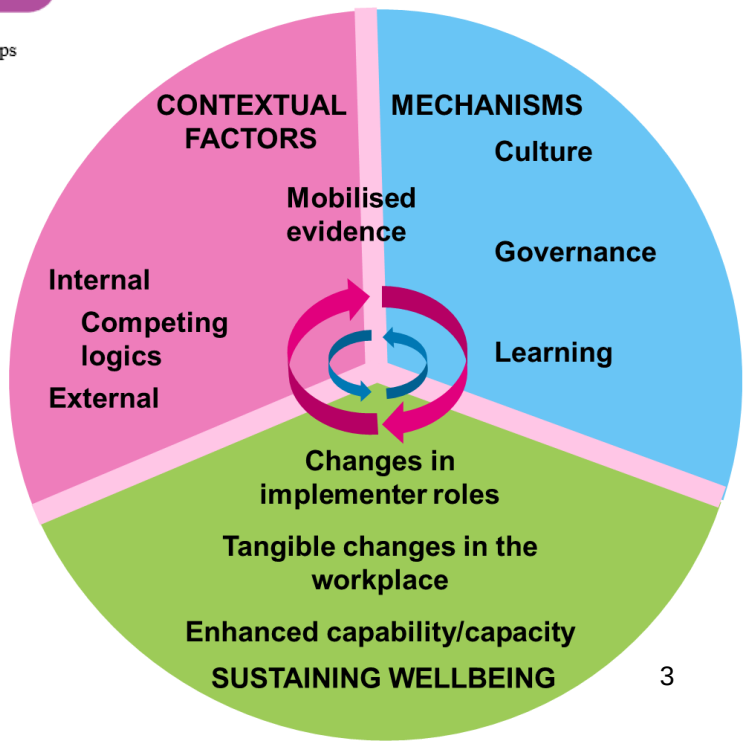
How

Before - data

During – data

After – informed guessing





"We just want you to fire a magic bullet and make our lives better!"

what works wellbeing

What Research Tells Us Works

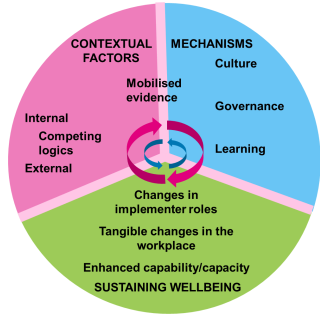
Top three include risk prevention approaches

Many organisations don't get much past the bottom two

All very well – but does not offset risk
Either legally or empirically!

Strategic or cultural?

What Kind of Organisation Do We Want to Be?



Evidence-based practice essential for activities that work

Plus

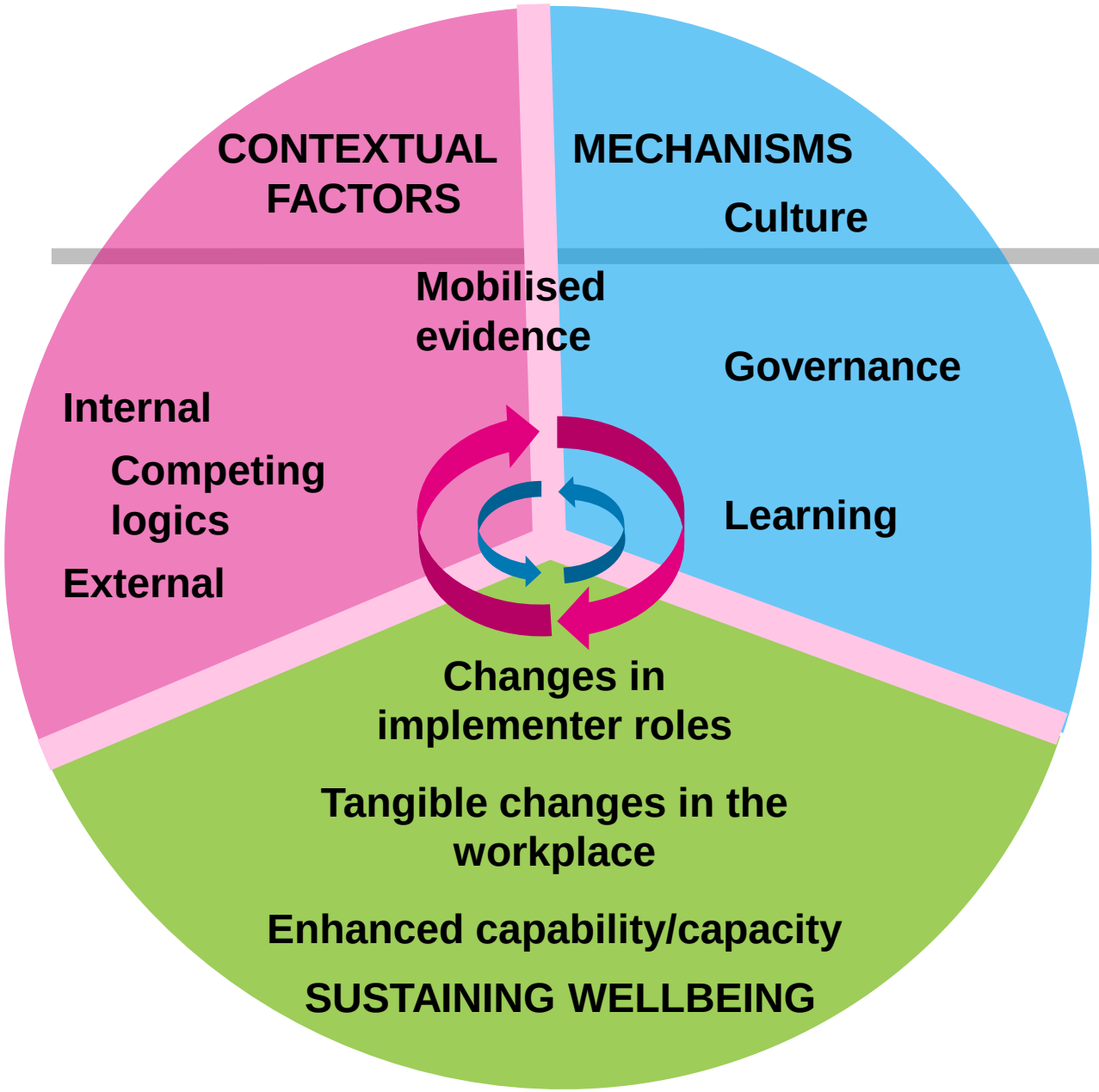
Covering all bases addresses and a multitude of concerns

Reflects best practice (hierarchy of controls)

Possible synergies through symbolic effects

Planned strategic elements as support

Cultural mainstreamed at all levels
flexibility



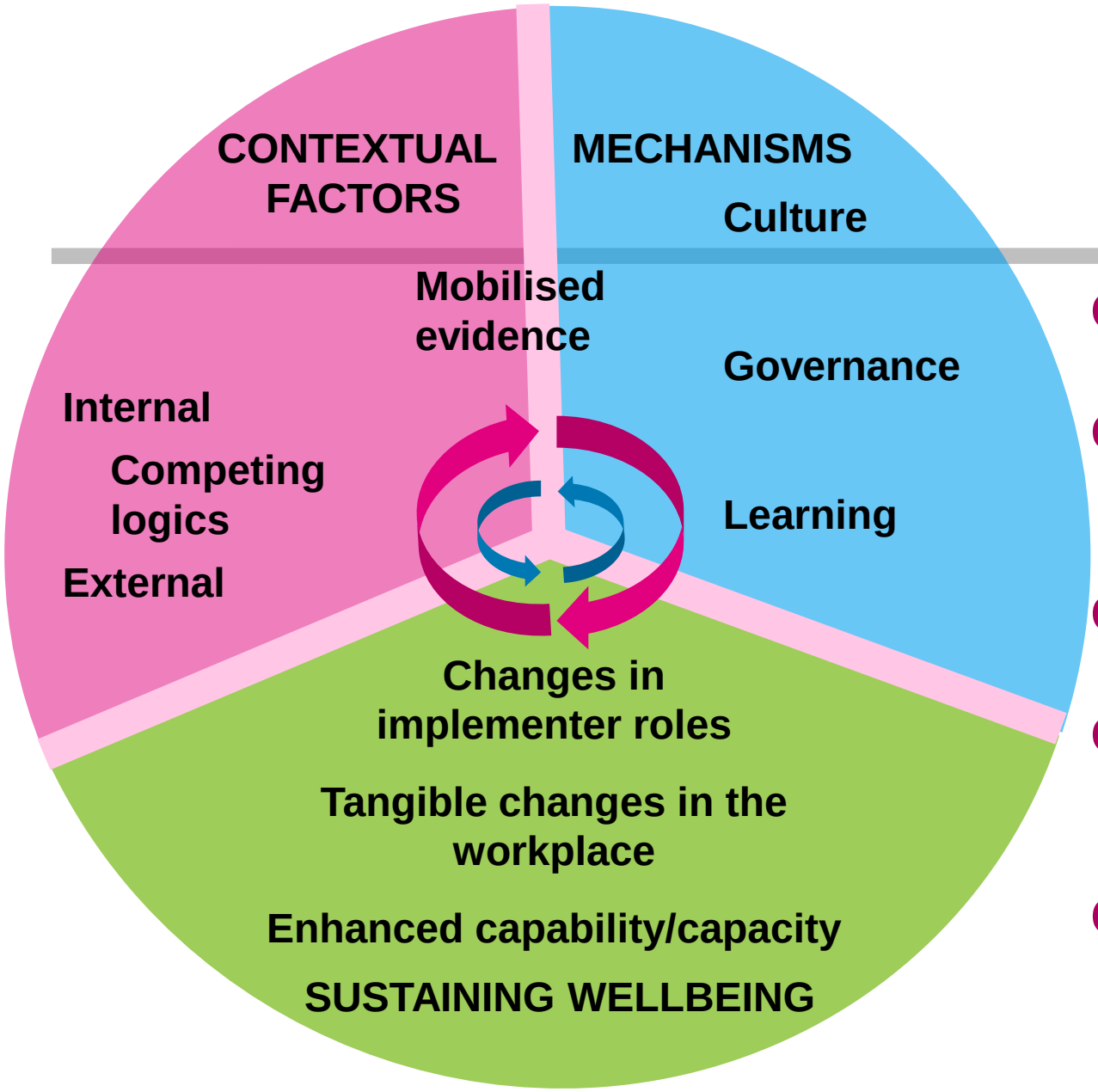
Evidence to build the business case
- Use stories to enliven data-led arguments
- Appeal to values as well as ROI
- Business awareness

Senior leaders as catalysts

Inclusive governance to co-ordinate multiple activities that address concerns

- Learning processes vital
- Bottom-up as well as top-down activities
- Dynamic balance of consistency and flexibility

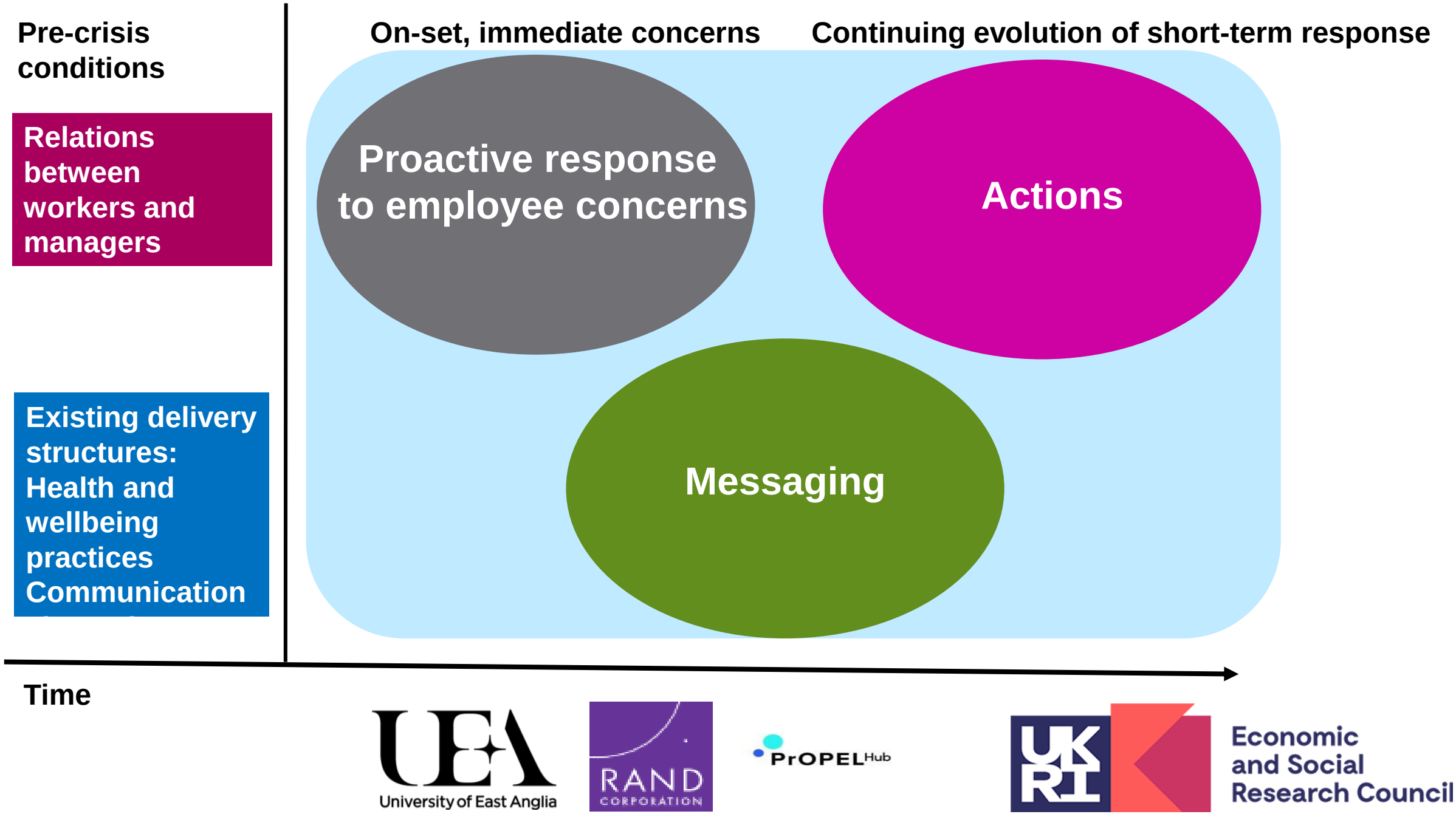
Implementers
- Not just HR/OH ‘experts’
- Agents to spread the word
- Resourced!



what works wellbeing

Communication	to bridge across initiatives
Coherence	components integrated into a programme
Commitment	persevere and learn
Consistency	graft onto current practices
Create*	confront and change toxic and harmful practices into new ones

* Senior management appears critical



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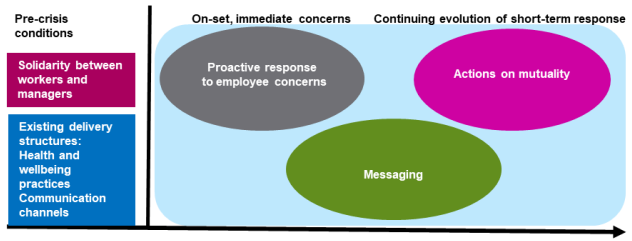
PROACTIVE RESPONSES



Pre-emptive

e.g. moved to home working pre-lockdown

Beyond normative expectations

Reactive responders only acted on Government guidance

Utilises employee consultation mechanisms

Very quickly our workforce made it known to the management team that they didn't want to be there. And the management took on board the views of the workforce and said: we agree, we don't want you to be there either so go home

(manager, construction company)

we had an emergency staff meeting even though we were told not to have staff meetings because of social distancing

(worker)

WHAT NEXT?

New key challenges

- Reintegrating workers
- Workplace accommodations – CMD, MSKs, post-viral fatigue
- Permanent shift in working practices
- Inequalities in exposure correlated with lack of job quality
- Job security and associated inequalities
- ……

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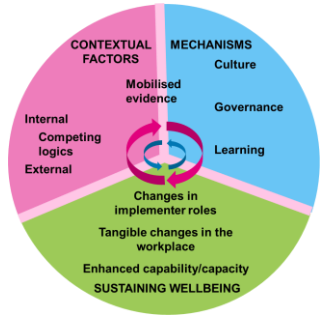
WHAT NEXT?



Basics still apply

Comprehensive and cultural approaches – signals

- **To managers on appropriate decisions**
- **To workers that help is there if needed and to seek help**

Inclusive governance, learning and improvement

From 2008-2010

- **Job loss not as big as expected – other strategies used**
- **Involving employees in decisions offset some recessionary actions**

Material & supporting toolkits can be found at:

https://whatworkswellbeing.org/category/guidance-workplace-wellbeing/

https://worklifeapp.whatworkswellbeing.org/

https://whatworkswellbeing.org/category/work/

https://www.propelhub.org/

Twitter: @WorkLearnWell

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