

Press release: High quality evidence helps government deliver better public services

The government-funded network, which is made up of 10 independent What Works Centres, was created to improve the use and generation of robust evidence in policy areas such as health, education and policing.

The progress report, released today to mark the network's fifth anniversary, highlights how public funds and resources have been allocated more effectively, thanks to evidence provided by independent researchers in the government-backed What Works Centres.

For example, research from the Early Intervention Foundation showed the impact of parent conflict on children's long-term outcomes. This research informed the decision of the Department for Work and Pensions to invest £30 million in interventions designed to resolve parent conflict in families with the most disadvantaged children.

By translating complex evidence into practical and useable tools, the What Works Centres help public sector decision-makers deliver the best possible outcomes for the public.

David Lidington, Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Elizabeth Truss, Chief Secretary to the Treasury said:

This government is committed to delivering public services that work for the ordinary citizen. Services delivered by schools, hospitals, GP practices, residential care homes, and police forces have all been enhanced by the findings of the What Works network.

The UK is now seen as a world-leader in the application of evidence in policy and practice and that is largely due to the increasing profile of the What Works Centres.

Dr David Halpern, What Works National Adviser said:

At the request of the Cabinet Secretary and Prime Minister, it has been a great honour to champion this agenda these last five years. Answering the question 'What works?' is hard work, but often a game changer. We've been asking this question in medicine for 50 years, and it's saved countless lives. Now we're asking it in schools, policing and economic growth policies, and its impact is proving equally large.

Megan Dixon, Director of Literacy, Aspire Educational Trust said:

The research that the EEF [Education Endowment Foundation] does helps us make really effective decisions about what to focus on in schools. It is great to have independent, robust research to consider when you are thinking about adopting a new approach.

Sir Jeremy Heywood, Head of the Civil Service said:

What Works' is a quietly radical agenda that is materially increasing the supply of evidence available to decision-makers. I am delighted to see that the public sector is embracing it.