



## Call for What Works Trial Advice Panel members (external)

### Background

In 2015, the Cabinet Office and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) established the [What Works Trial Advice Panel](#) to help civil servants design and implement effective trials and evaluations. It is a free advisory service made up of experts from academia and government.

### About the role

We are looking for external experts to join our Trial Advice Panel to support high quality evaluation practice across government. This role offers an opportunity to work at the forefront of efforts to ensure that spending and practice in public services is informed by the best available evidence. Being a member of the Panel also enables members to build their relationships and networks in government as well as with other academic members of the Panel.

This role is a voluntary position with a 2-year term (with potential to extend for 1 year). Members are expected to commit approximately 5-10 days per year for the activities listed below.

#### Activities:

- **Advice & support** – providing advice and support to civil servants in the design and implementation of evaluations, including:
  - Reviewing and commenting on theory of change/logic models, protocols/plans
  - Responding to ad-hoc requests for advice via email, telephone/video conference, and in person if feasible
  - Peer review of final reports setting out the results of evaluations
- **Collaboration & partnerships** – building relationships with other members of the Panel, both inside and outside of government, to enhance the support available to civil servants and share challenges, best practice and innovations in policy evaluation
- **Workshops/evaluation surgeries** – attending workshops and surgery-style events to provide advice and support to civil servants and to share expertise in policy evaluation
- **Communications & engagement** – promoting the work of the What Works Trial Advice Panel across relevant networks to help increase its reach and impact
- **Monitoring & evaluation** – contributing to the development of the Panel by providing feedback and ideas for improvement including:
  - Providing feedback during and after providing advice/support
  - Taking part in mid-term and end-of-term reviews with the What Works Evaluation Lead

## Who are we looking for?

We are looking for experts with the following:

- Extensive experience in designing and running evaluations using a range of methods and approaches, for example:
  - Experimental designs and analyses
  - Quasi-experimental designs and analyses, including regression discontinuity, difference in differences, propensity score matching
  - Theory-based evaluation
  - Qualitative comparative analysis
  - Machine learning and natural language processing
  - Economic evaluation
  - Process evaluation
  - Theory of Change/logic modelling
- An ability to turn expert knowledge into practical, helpful advice; and
- An understanding of the policy environment and the realities of undertaking evaluations at pace in complex areas of social policy

All panel members will be required to treat restricted Government information in confidence and will be expected to sign confidentiality agreements regarding the handling and sharing of Government information. There will be opportunities to discuss panel members' ability to publish from this work - and from the trials themselves - on a case-by-case basis.

## Benefits

- Opportunity to have a real impact on public spending by influencing the generation and use of evidence in policy-making across government
- Contributing to a cross-government programme to increase the use of high quality evaluation in the design and delivery of policies and programmes
- Provides insight into the needs of government decision makers across a wide range of policy areas, including crime and justice, housing, welfare, environment, health, and transport.
- Relationship building and networking with senior leadership across government and with other external experts
- Placement opportunities within the What Works Team, Cabinet Office and other government departments

## Compensation

Academics are encouraged to use relevant funds at their institution, e.g. ESRC-funded Impact Acceleration Accounts, to reimburse them for their time spent on Panel work and to cover any other costs associated with being on the Panel (for example, any travel expenses incurred).

## Application process

Individuals wishing to join the Panel should complete this [short form](#) and send their CV to [trialadvicepanel.cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:trialadvicepanel.cabinetoffice.gov.uk) by the 24<sup>th</sup> November. If successful we will require a letter of support from your Head of Department. We expect the Panel to be appointed by January 2020.

If you have any questions about the role, or would like to discuss it, please email [trialadvicepanel.cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:trialadvicepanel.cabinetoffice.gov.uk)

## About What Works

The What Works initiative aims to ensure that local and national decision-makers – from frontline practitioners to government ministers – have access to a robust evidence base on what works in public policy and services. Launched by the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury in 2013, it comprises a network of research centres, including the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the Education Endowment Foundation. The centres assess and communicate the evidence base on policy areas that represent more than £200 billion of public spending. Where evidence is weak or unavailable, the centres help inform spending decisions by commissioning or supporting trials to test what works. The What Works Network enjoys strong sponsorship from Ministers and the Cabinet Secretary.

<https://www.gov.uk/what-works-network>

At the centre of the initiative is a small What Works team in the Cabinet Office, supported by David Halpern, the What Works National Advisor. The team sits at the heart of government in the Prime Minister's Implementation Unit.

The What Works team:

- Supports and strengthens the What Works Network, including facilitating the creation of new centres and enabling existing centres to interact effectively with each other and government;
- Advises Ministers in bringing evidence to bear in public policy and spending decisions;
- Provide advice and support to Whitehall departments on evaluation, such as the design and implementation of randomised controlled trials.