



Call for What Works Trial Advice Panel members (internal)

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 civil servants with expertise in evaluation design and methods to join our What Works Trial Advice Panel to help facilitate and support good quality evaluation practice across government. This role offers an opportunity to work at the forefront of efforts to ensure that spending and practice across Whitehall is informed by the best available evidence. Being a member of the Panel enables members to build their network as well as develop their evaluation knowledge and skills.

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

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
 Facilitating and coordinating access to advice and support from external Trial Advice Panellists including:
 - screening requests from potential Panel 'customers'
 - liaising with 'customers' to ensure their ask is relevant, specific, and appropriate for the Panel
 - setting up and facilitating interactions with Panellists via email, telephone/video conference, in person if feasible
- **Collaboration & partnerships** - building relationships with other members of the Panel, inside and outside of government, to enhance the advice and support available to civil servants, share challenges, best practice and innovations in policy evaluation.
- **Quarterly workshops** – meeting quarterly with other members of the Panel from inside government to hear from external speakers, share updates of Panel work, challenges, best practice and innovations in policy evaluation.
- **Communications & engagement** – promoting the work of the Trial Advice Panel across government to help increase its profile and reach.

- **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
 - Collecting feedback from other Panel members and users of the Panel
 - 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 individuals with 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 difference, propensity score matching
- Theory-based evaluation
- Qualitative comparative analysis
- Machine learning and natural language processing
- Economic evaluation
- Process evaluation
- Theory of Change/logic modelling

Benefits

- Contributing to a cross-government programme to increase the use of high quality evaluation in the design and delivery of policies and programmes
- Insight into the needs of decision makers across a wide range of policy areas, including crime and justice, housing, welfare, environment, health, and transport.
- Relationship building and networking with other evaluation experts inside and outside of government
- Placement opportunities within the What Works Team, Cabinet Office and other government departments

Application process

Individuals wishing to join the Panel should complete this [short form](#) and send their CV to the trialadvicepanel@cabinetoffice.gov.uk by the 24th November. If successful we will require a letter of support from your line manager. 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

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 What Works initiative is a small team in the Cabinet Office, which comprises David Halpern (the What Works National Advisor), 1 x Head of What Works, 1 x Evaluation Lead, and 1 x Policy Advisor. The team sits at the heart of government in the Prime Minister's Implementation Unit.

The team:

- Support and strengthen the What Works Network, including facilitating the creation of new centres and enabling existing centres to interact effectively with each other and government;
- Advise 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.