

Pioneering surgeon leads 'quiet revolution' for better services

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A pioneering surgeon who uses figures to fight crime is using his passion for research to change the way UK Government works.

Professor Jonathan Shepherd is leading a 'quiet revolution' – helping policy makers design systems to deliver better services, from health and social care to education and ageing.

The Cardiff University researcher's campaign to design and build better public services through 'evidence-based' approaches is being backed by

the Cabinet Office.

One of Professor Shepherd's ideas, to promote trials to test new policies across government, is already being implemented as part of the '[What Works network](#)' – a strategy for improved services which has been heavily influenced by Professor Shepherd's drive to put research and best practice at the heart of Government.

Professor Shepherd's report to the Cabinet Office – 'How to achieve more effective services: the evidence ecosystem' – will be shared next month (25 November) when the six What Works centres air their findings on what we should and should not be spending money on.

In the report, Professor Shepherd draws on processes used in the petrochemical industry to illustrate how his vision for better services is shaped by the evidence process.

Professor Shepherd said: "Discussion about evidence often includes references to 'pipelines', or evidence supply, and 'leaks' between evidence awareness and implementation. Like crude oil, evidence has to be generated, refined, distributed and used if it is to achieve its potential.

"Evidence needs to flow through the system. A series of 'pumps' – or product pushes and demand pulls – are needed. Pipelines need to connect with end users, and the evidence needs to be provided in usable forms as it is drawn through the system."

Professor Shepherd leads Cardiff University's award-winning Violence and Society Research Group. His 'Cardiff Model' uses data gathered from Accident and Emergency units to pinpoint and tackle violence across the UK and abroad. He is a long-standing champion of evidence-based approaches to problem solving.

Launched in 2013, the Network forms part of the Government's plan to reform the Civil Service. It consists of six independent centres that gather and share evidence on what works to inform government policy making in health, education, crime reduction, early intervention, ageing and local economic growth. The centres cover spending of more than £200 billion in public services.

Dr David Halpern, What Works National Advisor, said: "Professor Shepherd's report lays bare how much we still have to do, not least in building the evidence base on what drives the spread and adoption of [evidence](#) itself. We have come a long way in the past few years, and I cannot wait to see what this quiet revolution can do in the coming years to improve the education of our kids, to boost growth, reduce crime, and fundamentally improve the quality of our fellow citizens' lives."

Provided by Cardiff University

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