

£12 million funding boost for cutting-edge government projects



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Projects being funded include new approaches to tackling drug misuse in prisons and preventing violence against women and girls

The Evaluation Accelerator Fund will help test and evaluate new policies through intelligent data-driven insights

Fund run by the Evaluation Task Force forms part of a wider push from Ministers for officials to drive efficiencies in new ways

More than £12 million of funding has been awarded to teams tackling deep-rooted issues, such as drug misuse in prisons, violence against women and homelessness.

The funding, run by the Evaluation Task Force (ETF), is the latest demonstration of the government's drive to ramp up the use of data as ministers work with officials to come up with innovative approaches to tackle age-old issues.

The 16 projects awarded money via the Evaluation Accelerator Fund will test and develop new data-driven approaches to policy-making and evaluation.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Kit Malthouse said:

We must constantly agitate and innovate to improve public services, always eager to try smart solutions to complex, deep-rooted problems across our nation.

Whether it's tackling drug misuse in prisons or finding new ways to confront violence against women and girls, this £12 million investment will help explore and develop those

solutions so we can improve the lives of people in all of society.

The Evaluation Task Force invited bids from teams across Whitehall and the What Works Network, asking people to pitch new and innovative ideas for testing and evaluating the impact of new policies or innovative approaches to delivering public services. The bids were focused on addressing the Prime Minister's six core missions: Levelling Up, Net Zero, Education, Health, Justice and Jobs.

The bids also needed to demonstrate how they would provide robust evidence of financial or efficiency savings, tying in with the wider push within the government to ensure taxpayers are receiving the best possible value for their money.

One successful bid, which has received £933k from the Accelerator Fund, will see wastewater in prisons monitored and tested for illegal substances, making it easier for prison staff to identify who is holding supply and reduce drug abuse in jails. Another funded programme is run by the Centre for Homelessness Impact which received more than £200k to assess the effectiveness of a one-off payment to 18-year-olds leaving care on homelessness, employment and their involvement in criminal activity.

Around £1.7m also went towards work being undertaken by the College of Policing to identify promising interventions aimed at tackling violence against women and girls. Possible options include forensic tagging of perpetrators of crime in the Night Time Economy and the use of domestic abuse courts.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury Simon Clarke said:

Making the most of innovative ideas is one of the best ways we can continue to drive efficiency in the public sector, so it's great to see funding going towards creative solutions to such important issues.

Alongside cracking down on fraud and cutting the Government's property bill, a focus on evidence-led policy will help us ensure that we are making the most of taxpayers'

hard-earned money.

The money has been awarded by the Evaluation Task Force, a joint Cabinet Office and HM Treasury unit, which was set up as part of a commitment in the Declaration on Government Reform to embed gold standard evaluation in government.

ETF is an efficiency-focused unit whose work regularly demonstrates value for taxpayers. The team are currently working with the Department for Work and Pensions to support their evaluation of labour market interventions including Kickstart and Restart. Evaluations of similar initiatives in the past have delivered returns of more than £3 for every £1 invested.

Up to this point, the Task Force has worked on 162 programmes with a value of £47.9bn. If a relentless focus on evaluation across the whole of government drives only a 1% efficiency, the ETF would already have saved around £480million through its work advising departments' spending.

To find further information on the successful projects, please refer to the Evaluation Accelerator Fund page on [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk).

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