

# The Importance Of Knowing What Works (And What Doesn't)

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Team



Spot the odd one out

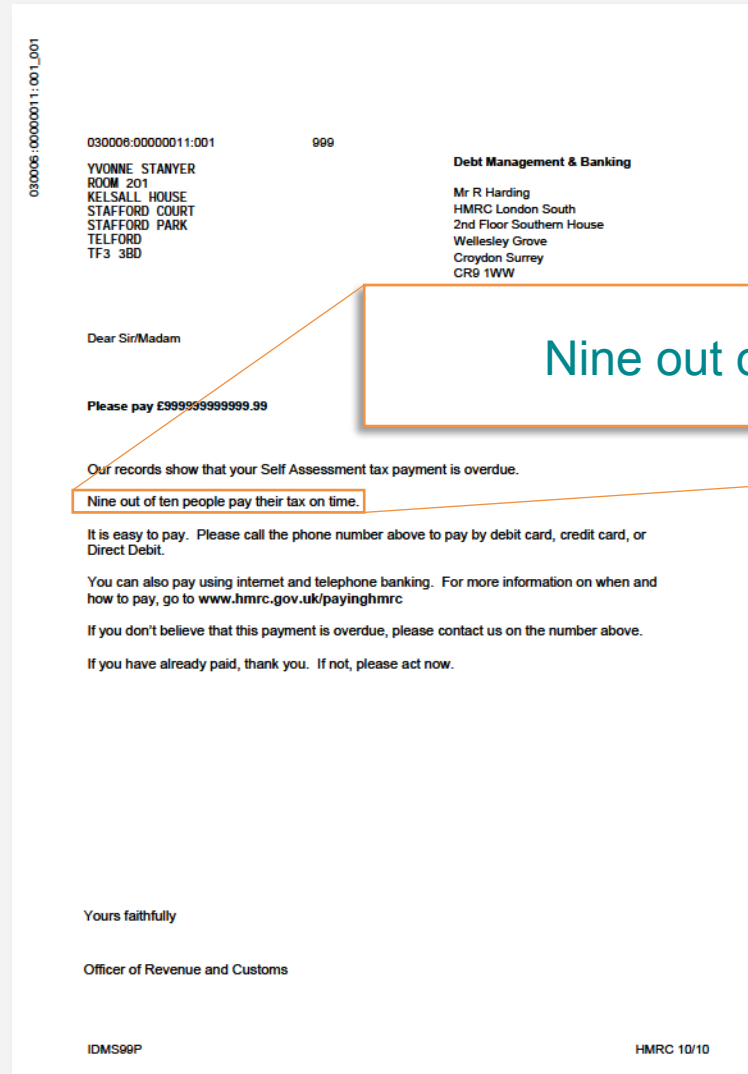






# Behavioural insights and experimentation in government

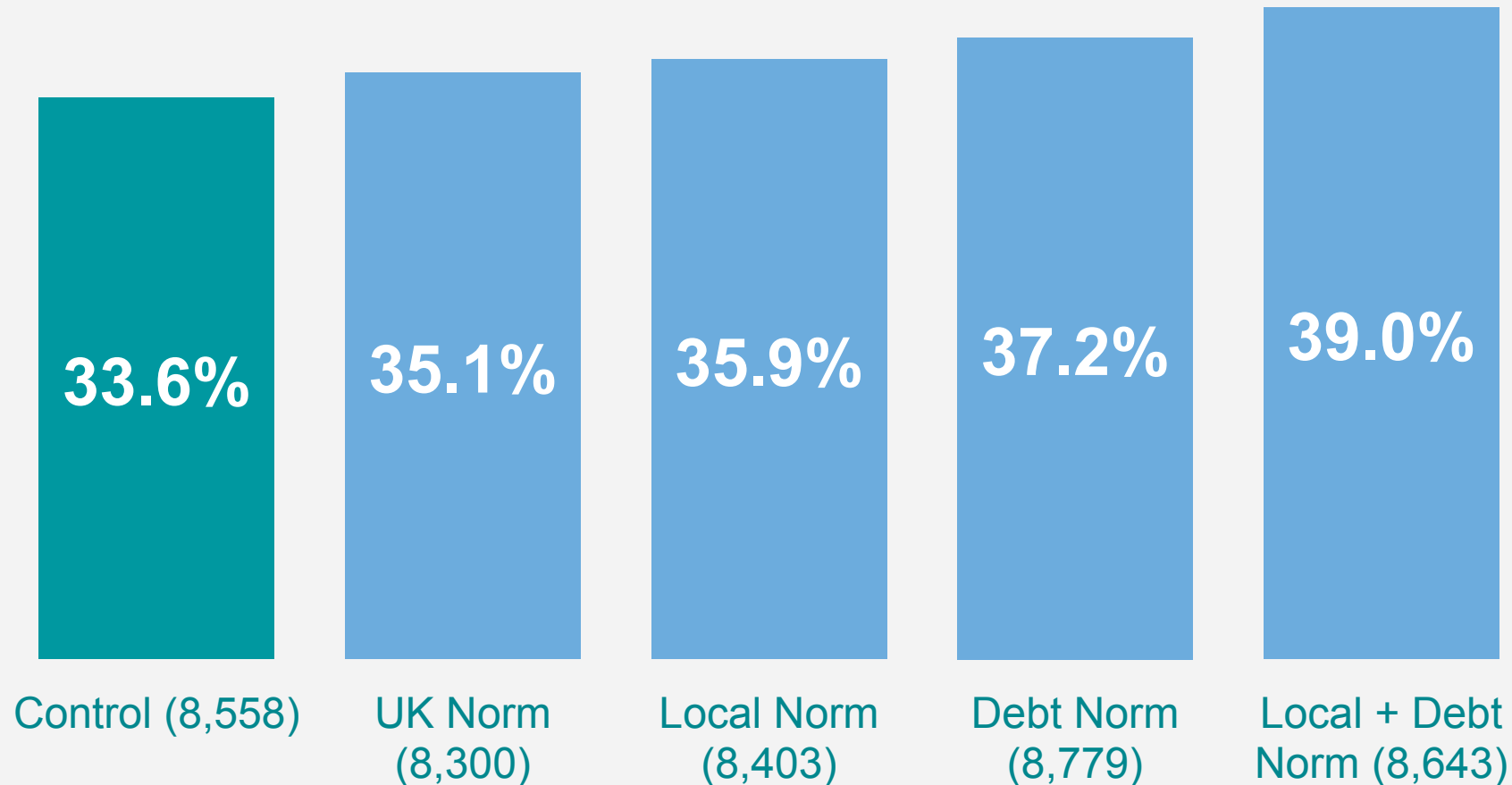
# Encouraging citizens to pay tax on time



Nine out of ten people pay their tax on time.

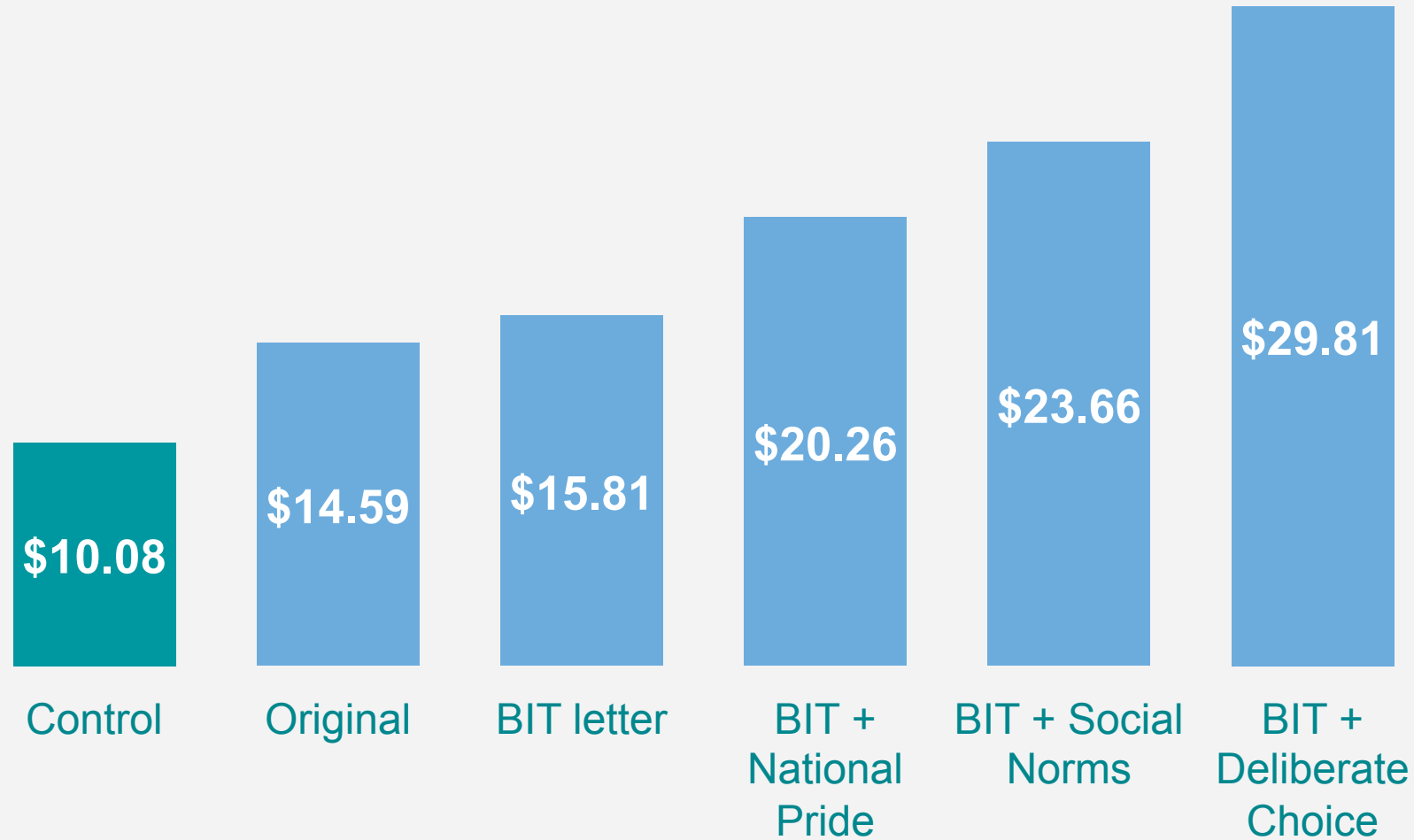
# Encouraging citizens to pay tax on time

Social norms to increase tax payment rates within 23 days (1 month)



# Replication: eg Guatemala (n=43,387)

Amount of tax received by letter sent (after 12 months)







**Supporting  
jobseekers back  
to work**



**THE  
BEHAVIOURAL  
INSIGHTS  
TEAM**

# Conversations focused on motivation

*Use this space to write down your commitment. Be as specific as possible about what you are going to do and when. Your advisor will be able to work with you to decide what might benefit you the most, but remember you are both working together to find the best way to find work.*

<b>Commitment:</b> I am going to spend 2 hours every weekday immediately after breakfast searching for vacancies online, e.g. on Monster	Adviser initials  <i>SM</i>
<b>Outcome:</b> Found 23 jobs, top 4 were: Customer Services Assistant, TG Smiths - Ref No: 12311; Retail Assistant, Homebuy - Ref No: 1-12955-85288; Customer Consultant, Walls - Ref No; 2568-92098; Store Manager, Townsends - Ref: 35ba	

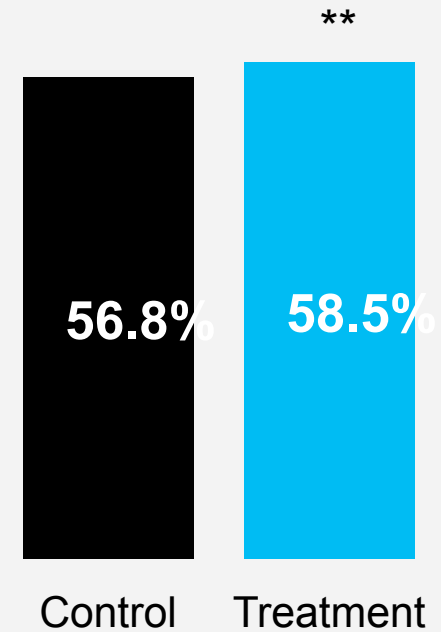
*Use this space to write down what happened after you when you completed your commitments and review this with your advisor. Be as **specific** as possible and be prepared to bring in your applications to your meetings so that your advisor can offer guidance on how you could improve.*

# Marginal Gains

Small but significant improvements add up to a large impact

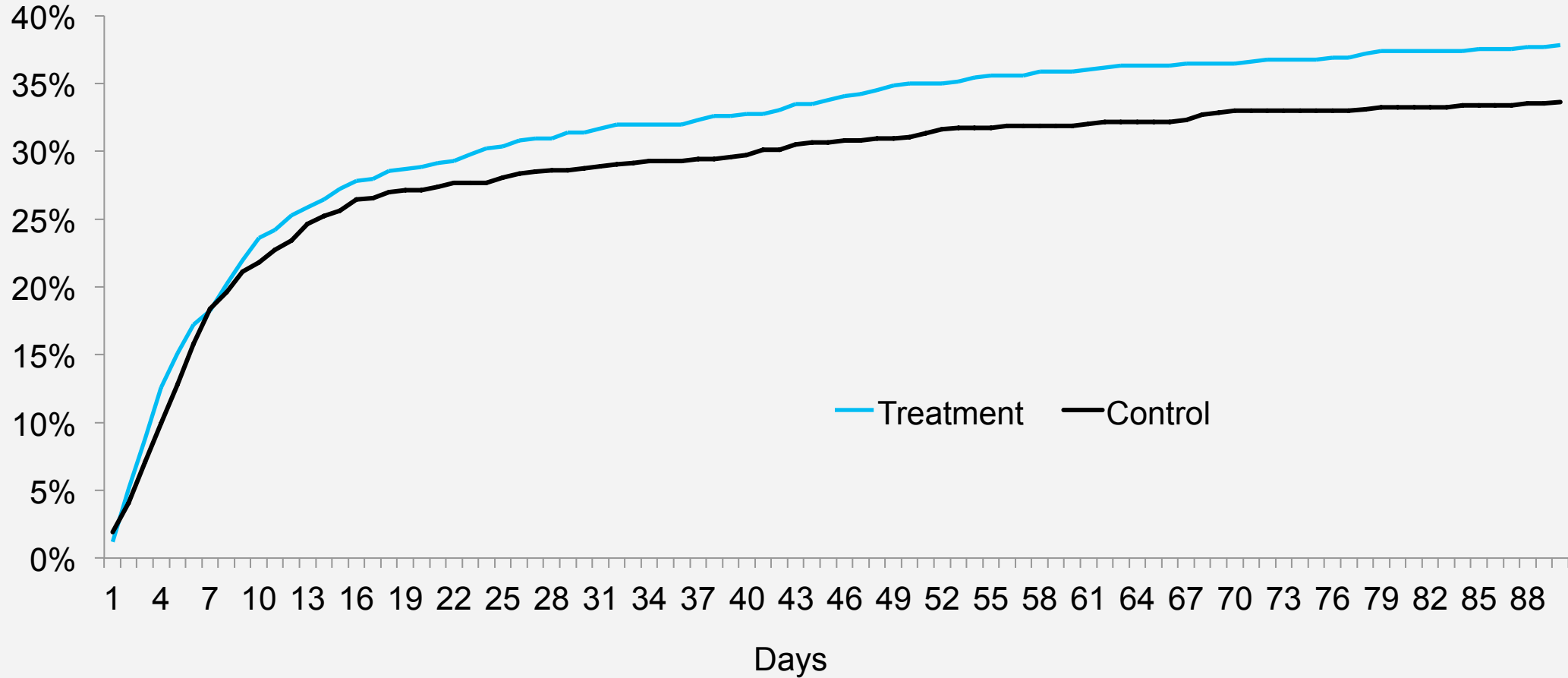
Site	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Colchester	Control	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat
Chelmsford	Control	Control	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat
Harlow	Control	Control	Control	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat
Clacton	Control	Control	Control	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat
Harwich	Control	Control	Control	Control	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat
Canvey	Control	Control	Control	Control	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat
Rayleigh	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat
Grays	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Treat	Treat	Treat	Treat
Basildon	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Treat	Treat	Treat
Braintree	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Treat	Treat
Witham	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Treat	Treat
Southend	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Control	Treat

Off-flow rates from benefits in Essex 'Stepped Wedged' trial (n = 110,838)



2.4m jobseekers per year → 5 million less days on benefits

# Replication: Australia & Singapore



# Mobilising informal support for students

What have you been up to at college today?

Meh.

OK. Well, let me know if I can help.



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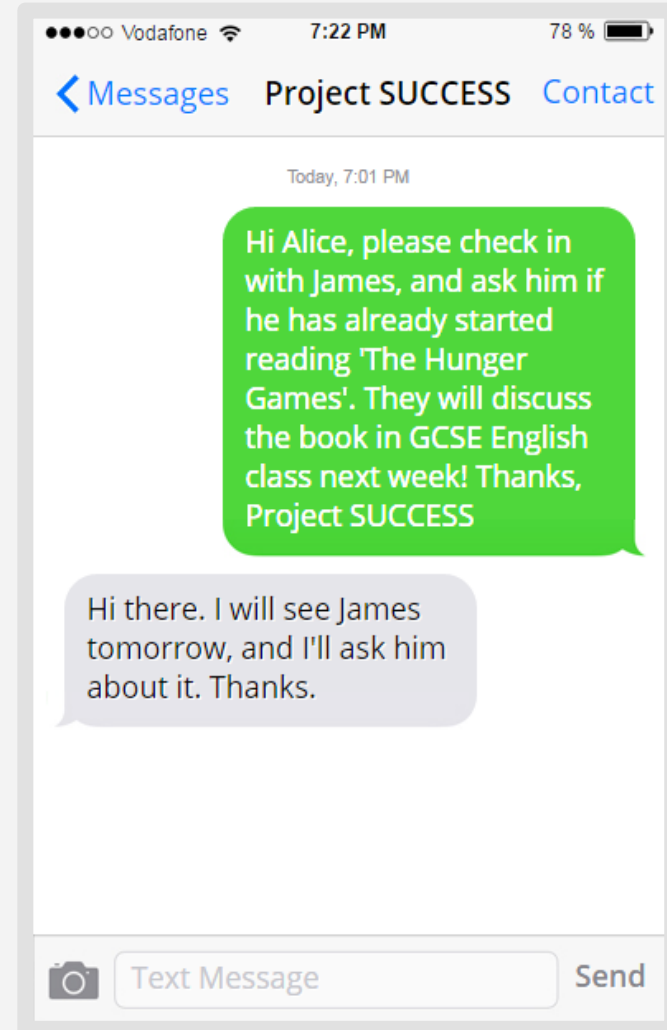
E  
Education  
E  
Endowment  
F  
Foundation

# Mobilising informal support for students

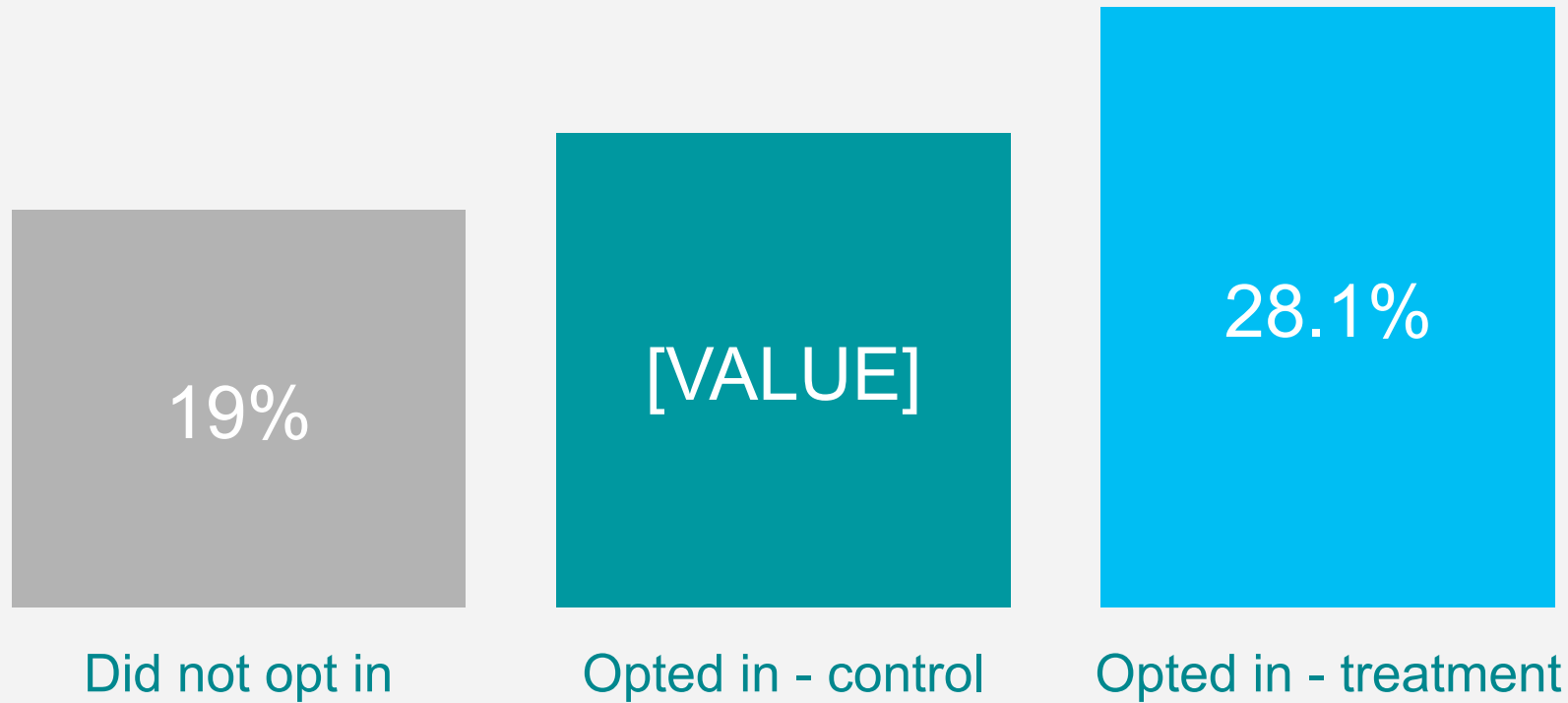
So, you're reading The Hunger Games in class? Who's your favourite character?

Yeah, need to get started on that.

OK, don't forget to read a few chapters before next week's class!

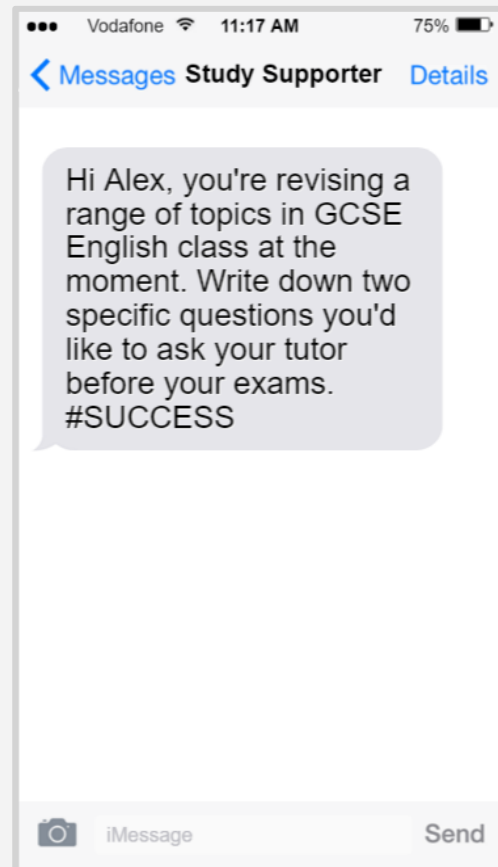


# GCSE pass rates increased by nearly 30%



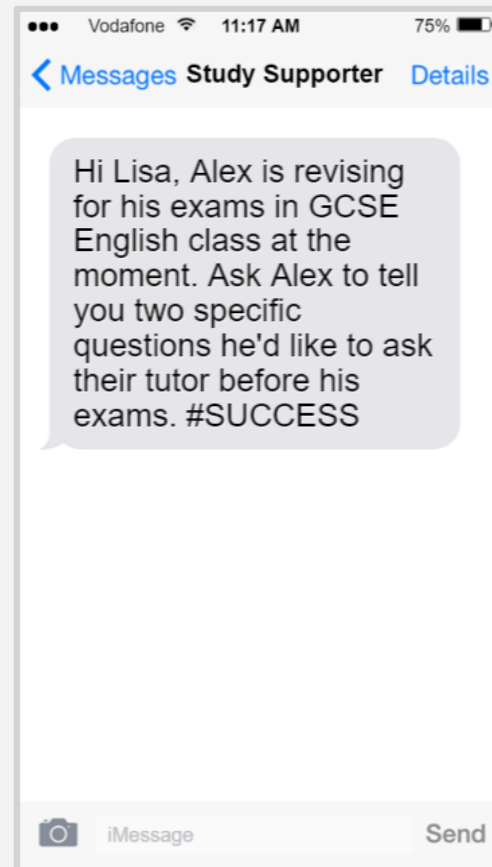
# Replication...and variation: ongoing!

**Version 1:  
Student texts**



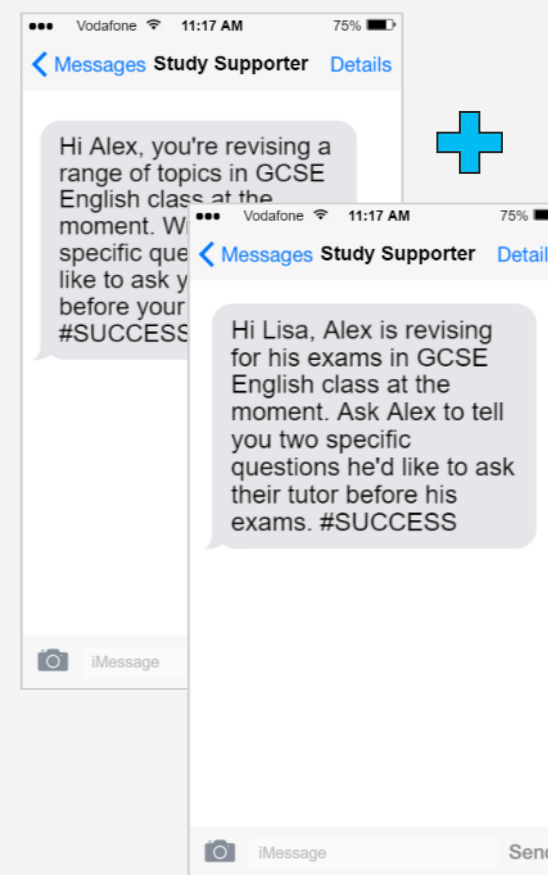
25%

**Version 2:  
Supporter texts**



25%

**Version 3: Student +  
Supporter texts**



25%



# Not everything works...

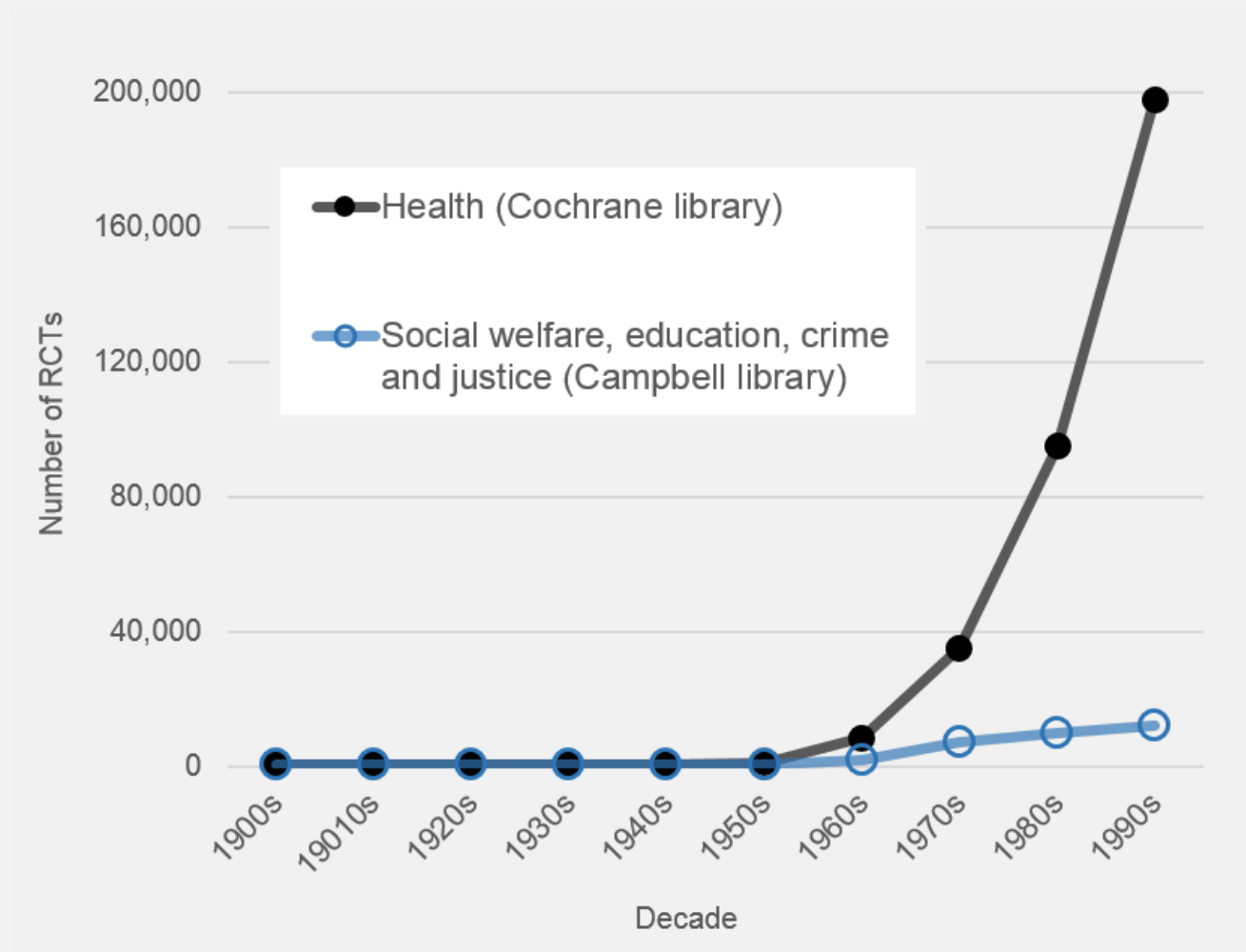


# The What Works Network



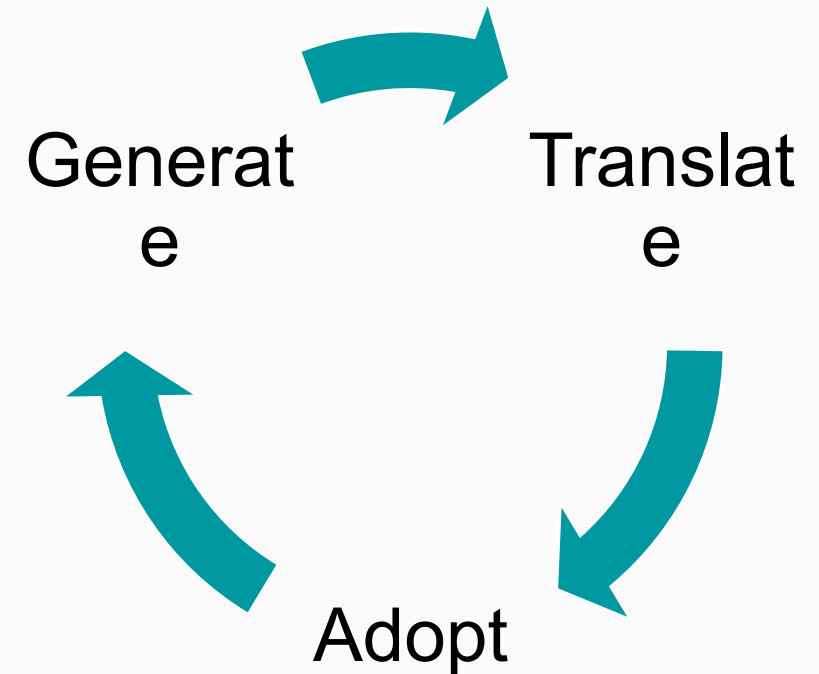
“...a NICE  
for social policy...”

Putting high-quality  
evidence in the hands of  
decision makers.



## What makes a What Works Centre?

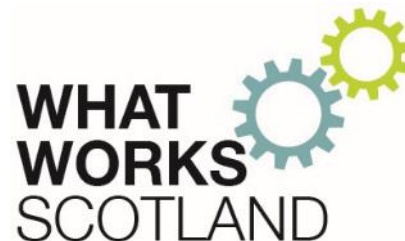
- Independent of government
- High-quality evidence syntheses and studies
- Translate assessments into practical guidance
- Build the capacity of decision makers to make use of evidence



What Works Network **W**



Between them, the What Works Centres cover policy areas worth over £200bn of public expenditure.





Evidence toolkits make it easy for decision makers to understand what works – and what doesn't.

A screenshot of the Education Endowment Foundation website. The browser address bar shows "https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk". The page displays a list of evidence toolkits with filters for Cost, Evidence, and Months Impact. A large red 3D-style text overlay reads "Used by 59% of English headteachers!".

Toolkit Strand	Cost	Evidence	Impact (months)
Arts participation Low impact for low cost, based on moderate evidence.	££££	🔒🔒🔒🔒	+2
Aspiration intervention Very low or no impact for moderate cost, based on very limited evidence.	£££££	🔒🔒🔒🔒	0
Behaviour interventions Moderate impact for moderate cost, based on extensive evidence.	££££	🔒🔒🔒🔒	+3
Block scheduling Very low or no impact for very low cost, based on limited evidence.	££££	🔒🔒🔒🔒	0
Built environment Very low or no impact for low cost, based on very limited evidence.	£££££	🔒🔒🔒🔒	0
Cooperative learning Moderate impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence.	£££££	🔒🔒🔒🔒	+5
Digital technology	££££	🔒🔒🔒🔒	+1

Some centres undertake RCTs, quasi-experiments and other qualitative research



## Body cameras for the police

The world's largest RCT of body-worn cameras by police, involving 2,060 police officers working in Emergency Response Teams across ten London boroughs.



## Free school breakfasts

A cluster RCT implemented in 100 primary schools, testing the effect of free, universal breakfast on pupil attainment.



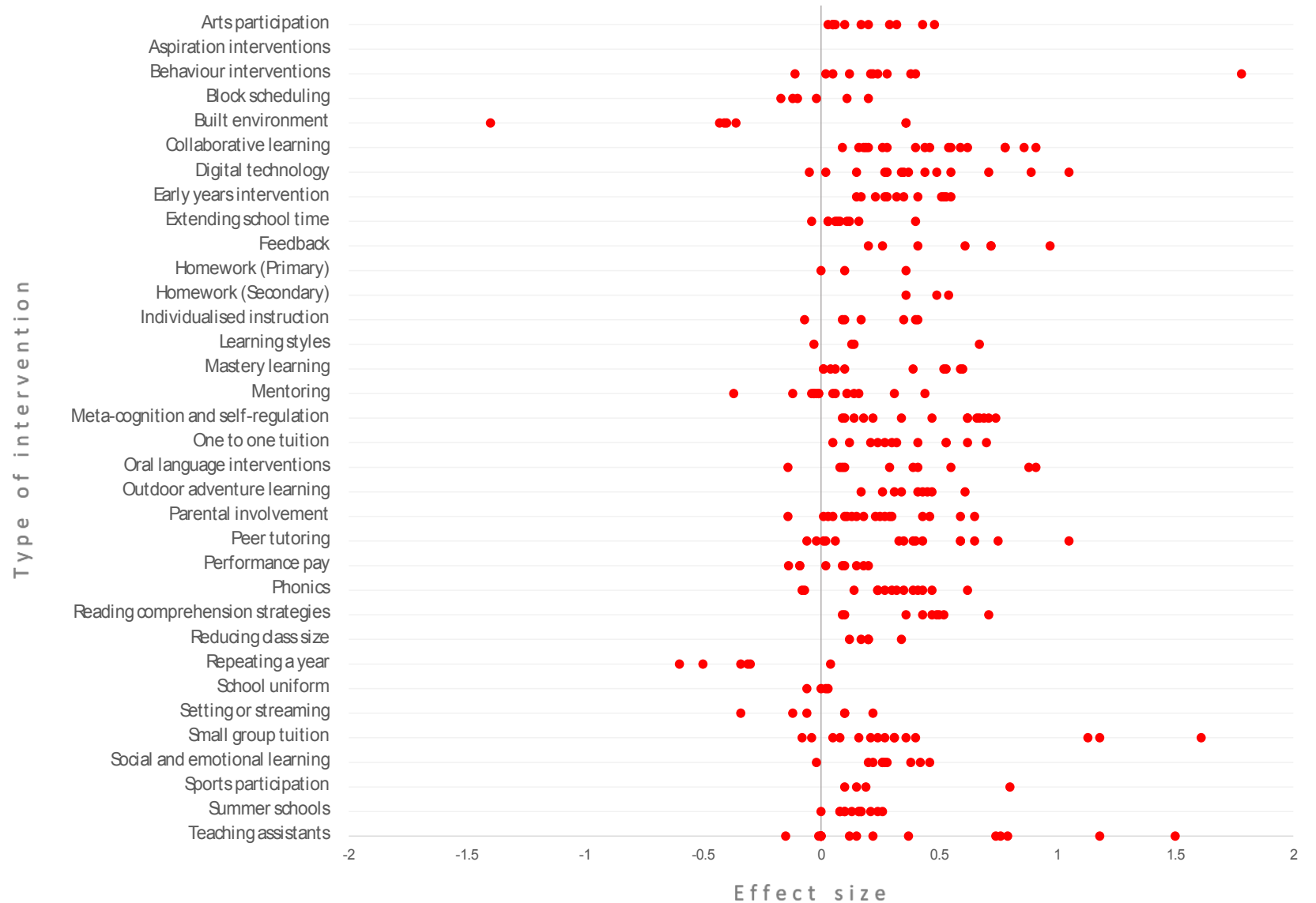
## Home adaptations for older people

Primary, qualitative research into the experiences of older people and care practitioners with regard to home adaptations.



One in three English schools and 1 million children have participated in 160 EEF trials

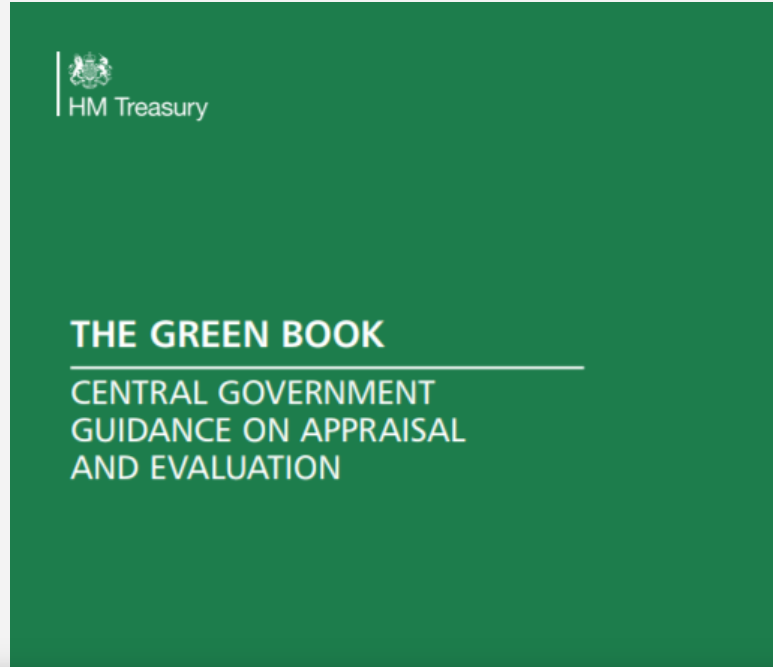
Each dot represents a single primary study.





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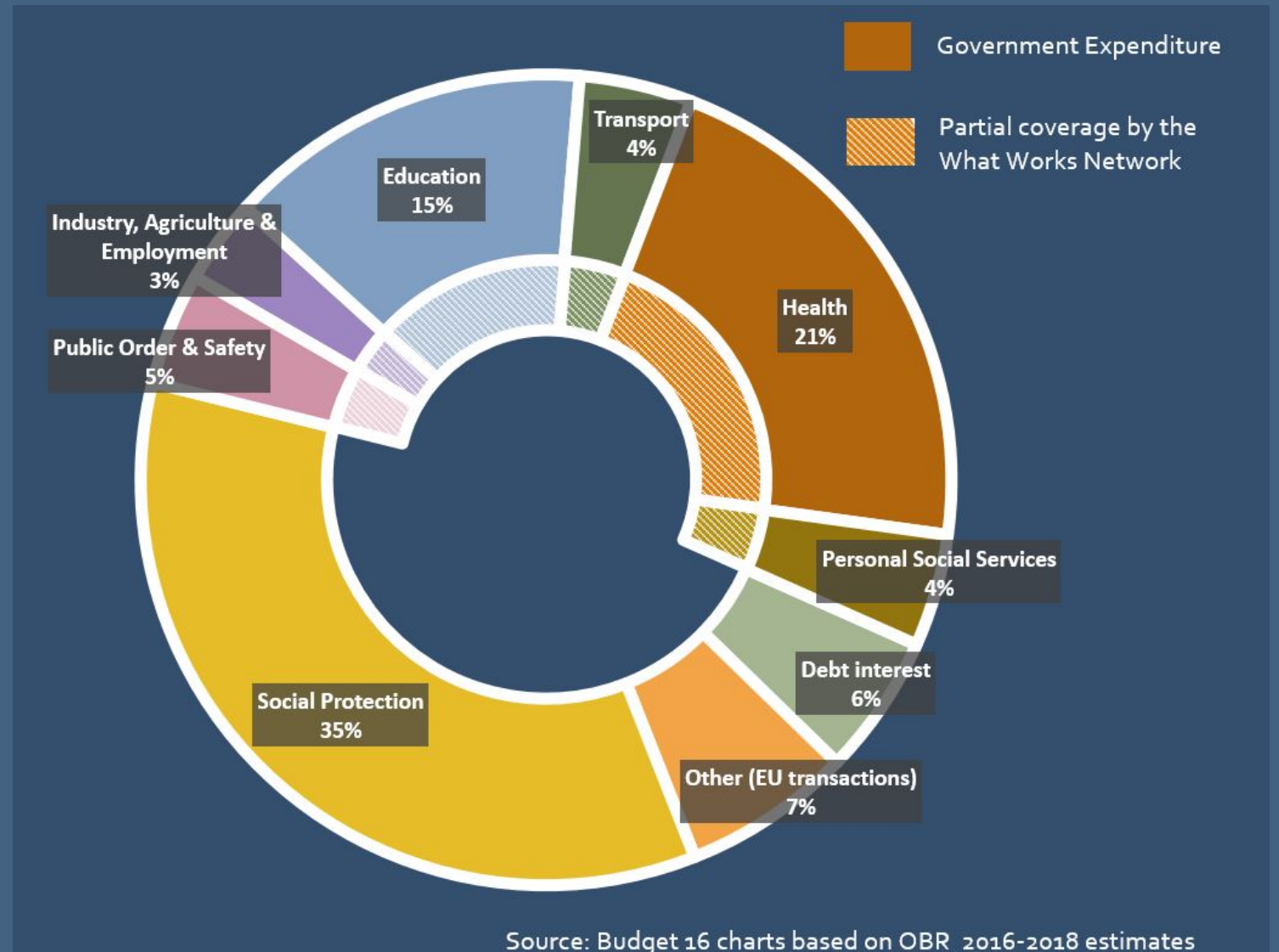


**3.7** Analysis and assumptions should have an objective basis in research. Relevant evidence can be drawn from evaluations of past interventions, evidence of “what works<sup>2</sup>”, international comparisons, academic and other literature and relevant experience. The strategic dimension should also identify where there are gaps in the evidence base.

**8.5** It is important to incorporate monitoring and evaluation into the development and appraisal stage of a policy, programme or project. Pilots can be used to test policy effectiveness of what works. Policies can also be designed with inbuilt variation to test the effectiveness of different approaches in real time.

**...so can we all go home?**

But still gaps...



# The Centres also show how weak the evidence base is in many areas...

## Apprenticeships

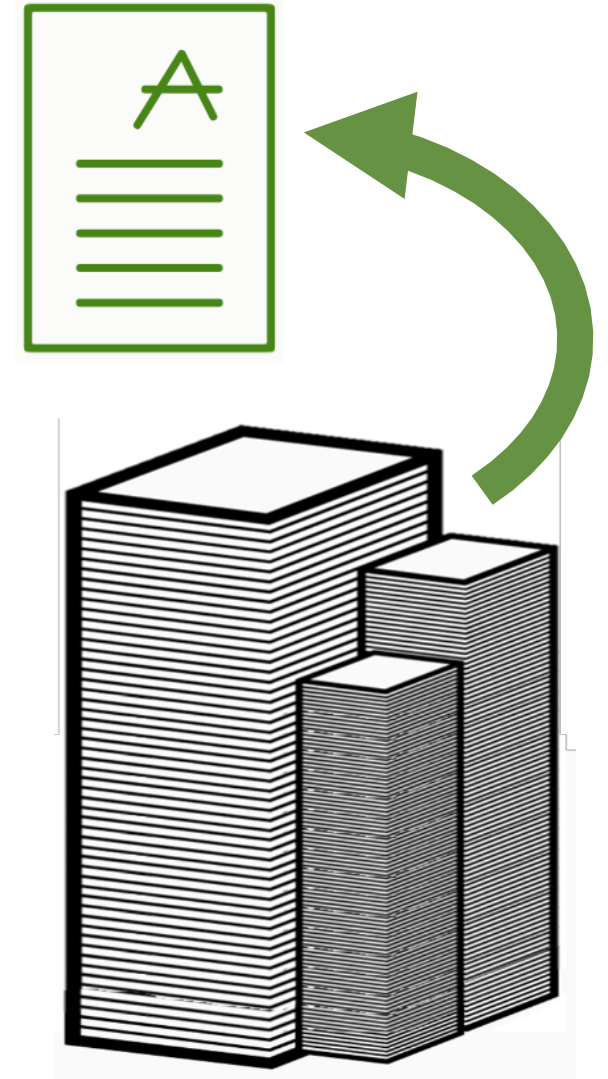
- **1,250** evaluations identified
- **19** met required standard



what works centre for  
local economic growth

## Asset focused approaches to tackling organized crime

- **310** evaluations
- **0** studies met requires standard



# TRIAL ADVICE PANEL

28 academic advisors + 18 government experts

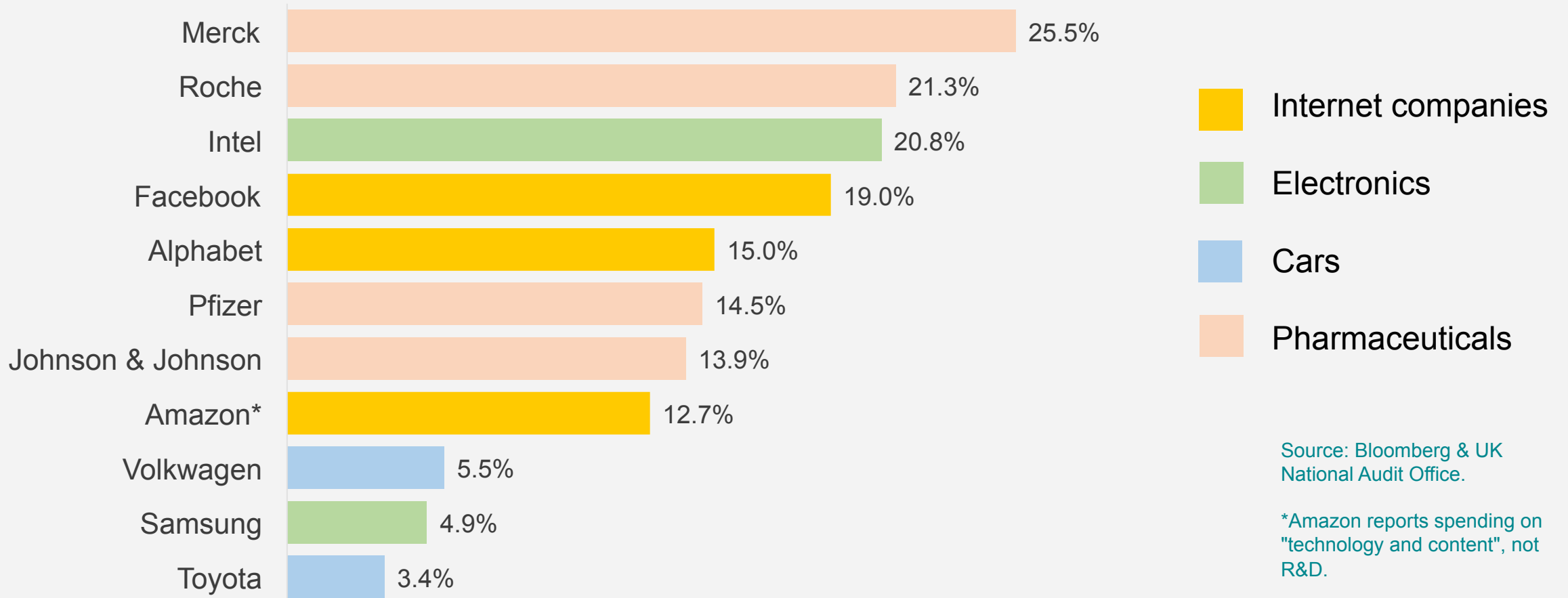


- End of life care
- Community integration
- Competitive energy markets
- Driver safety

- Reducing reoffending
- Adult learning
- Employment
- Business productivity
- Etc.

# Towards a more experimental government?

R&D spend as a proportion of total revenue (2017)



**What next?**

**Building a global evidence  
ecosystem.**





Building a system...

**International collaboration:**

Events, publications, implementation

**Cross-national funds:**

replication; cross-national challenges

**Infrastructure**

: trial register, common metrics

**Narrative**

**Absorption:**

EB professions

**Translation: WW**

**Innovation funds: YEF**

**Evaluation: TAP**

**Mining: productivity analysis**

**Data: ADRP**

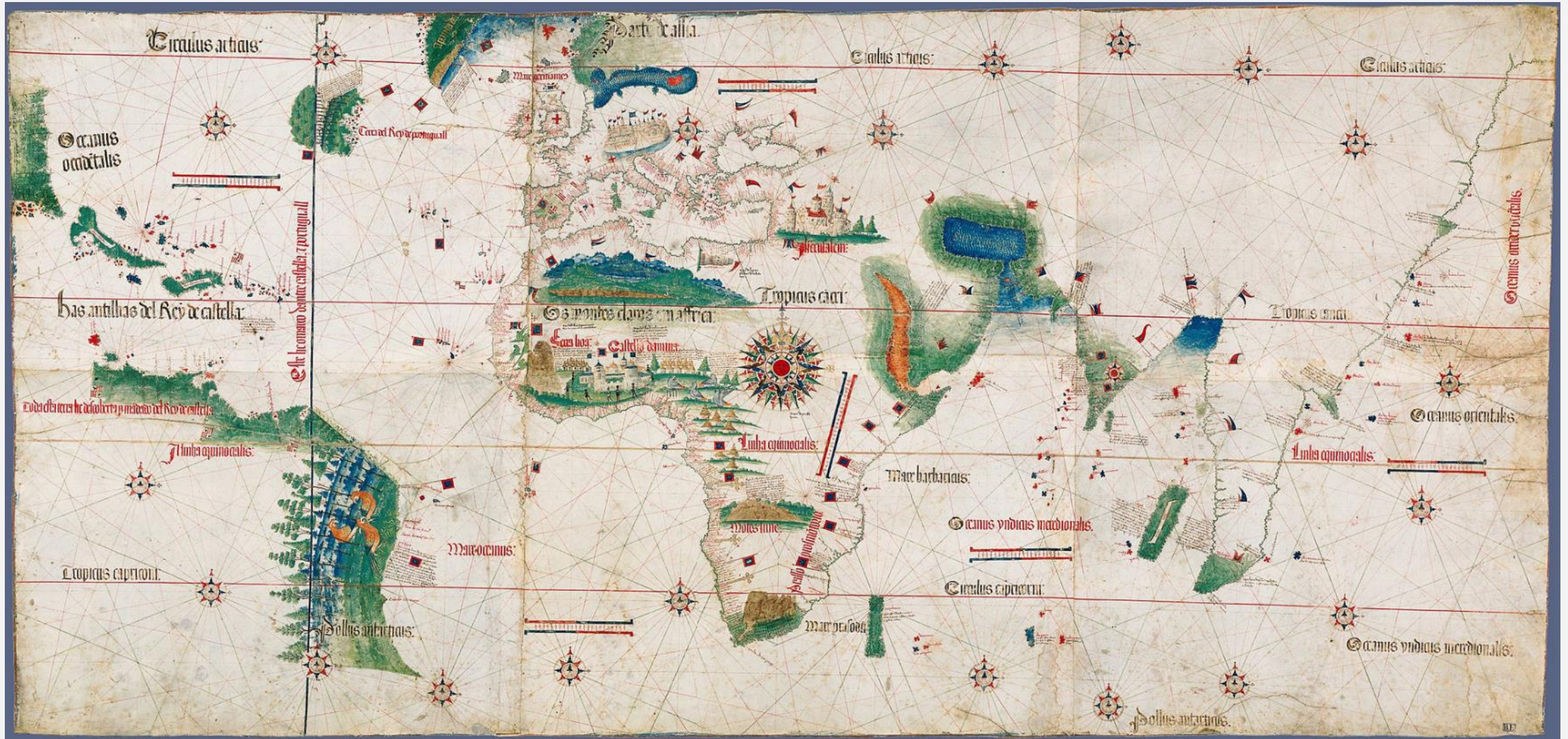
**Reviews:** co-fund

**Toolkits:** share & adapt

**Network:** evidence hubs

**Learning:** and testing materials

The starting point is humility - acknowledging what we don't know...



Cantino planisphere (1502)



Cabinet Office

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