

**Radical Statistics Conference:
Good data, good policy?**

7 March 2015

The Institute for Government aims to make government more effective



- Established 2008
- Non-partisan charity
- Mission to help make government more effective
- Combination of research and learning activity – not as distinct strands – but to look at how government should improve and help it to do so

Our work covers a number of themes



New models
of governance
and public
services



A more effective Whitehall



Leadership for government



Better policy making

Parliament and the
political process



Whitehall Monitor is our data-driven project

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Counting down but not enough? The latest civil service staff numbers

The Whitehall Monitor
17 December 2014

Today, the Office for National Statistics released the latest data for public sector employment, which report Civil Service staff numbers as at the end of September 2014. The figure looks at what it tells us about the Civil Service, and how it relates to the government's efforts to reduce costs. We find that the government is off track to meet its ambition to decrease the Civil Service to under 300,000 full-time equivalents (FTE) by 2015. But there has been a significant amount of change nonetheless. In the four years since the 2010 Spending Review, most departments have reduced their staff numbers by between 10% and 30%.

A new publication Whitehall

The civil service now employs 408,000 FTE, down 1,300 on the previous quarter.

Civil Service staff numbers September 2010 to 2014 (2010 full-time equivalents)

£ %

2014

Gevin Freeguard, Petr Bouchal, Robyn Murray, Caragh Nimmo and Julian McCree

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Whitehall Monitor 2014

A data-driven analysis of the size, shape and performance of Whitehall

£ %

2014

Gevin Freeguard, Petr Bouchal, Robyn Murray, Caragh Nimmo and Julian McCree

Institute for Gov (@instituteforgov)

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The shape of the Civil Service: remaking the grade | Blog bit.ly/1tkdzdc

City of London, London

Departments by grade composition, 2010 and 2014

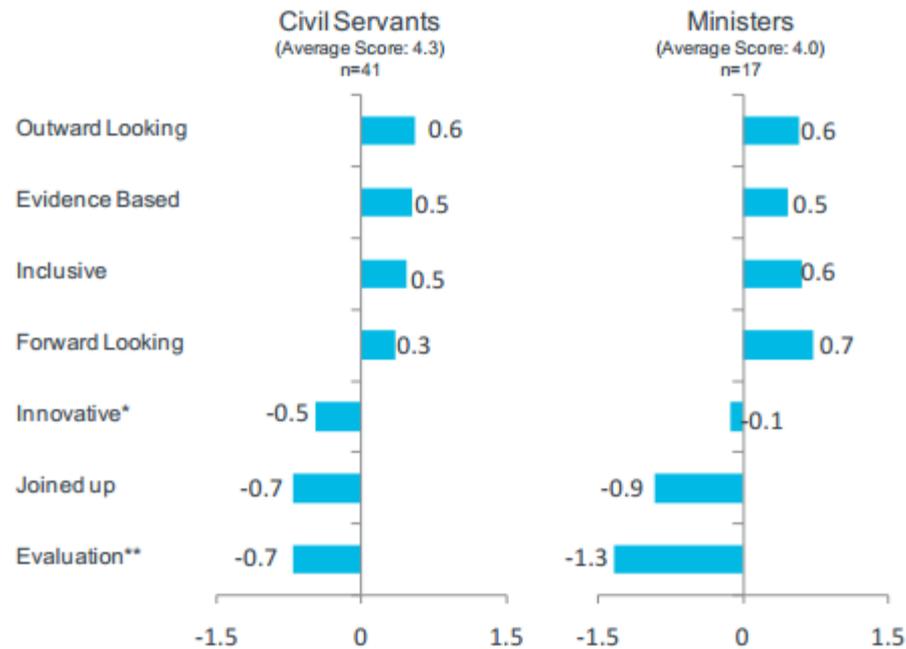
2010 2014

% of Civil Servants in grade. Managed departments. Fixed versus workforce for HFT.

54 REFERENCES 17

Evaluation, review and learning identified as a policy-making problem

Figure 1 – Strengths and weaknesses of policy making characteristics



Based on a survey of former ministers and Civil Servants. The results show the deviation from the average score given for various categories response to the following question: "In your experience, how often would you say that government policies were ..." (using a seven point scale where 1 = 'never' and 7 = 'always').

* Innovative, Flexible and Creative; ** Evaluation, Review and Learning

From Institute for Government, *Policy-Making in the Real World*, 2011



Problems of supply and demand need to be overcome

Supply

- Research not timely enough
- Not suited to rigorous testing
- Data not available

Demand

- Ethical issues around experimentation
- Political decisions driven by values – evidence brings political risk
- Lack of culture and skills
- Lack of open feedback

From Institute for Government, *Evidence and Evaluation in Policymaking*, 2012

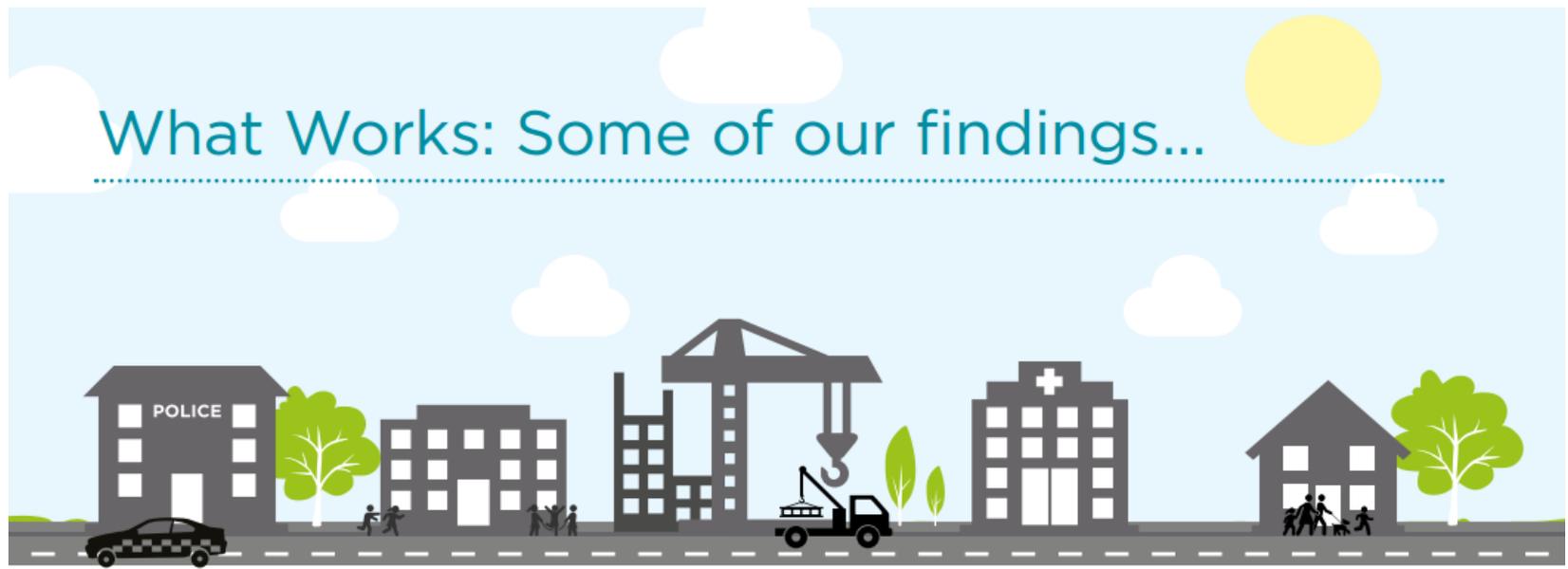
How can we improve the situation?

- Share expertise across government
- Adapt to the big data age
- Adapt to the open data age – and use it intelligently
- Make the case to politicians



What Works Centres allow best practice to be shared

What Works: Some of our findings...



Crime

'Hot spot' policing
- patrolling in small areas where crime has been concentrated - reduces crime and does not simply move it round the corner.

Education

Peer tutoring approaches, where learners work in small groups to provide each other with explicit teaching support, have, on average, a high impact on attainment at a low cost.

Local Growth

Whilst they have intrinsic social value, the local economic impacts of major sporting and cultural projects tend not to be large and are more often zero.

Health

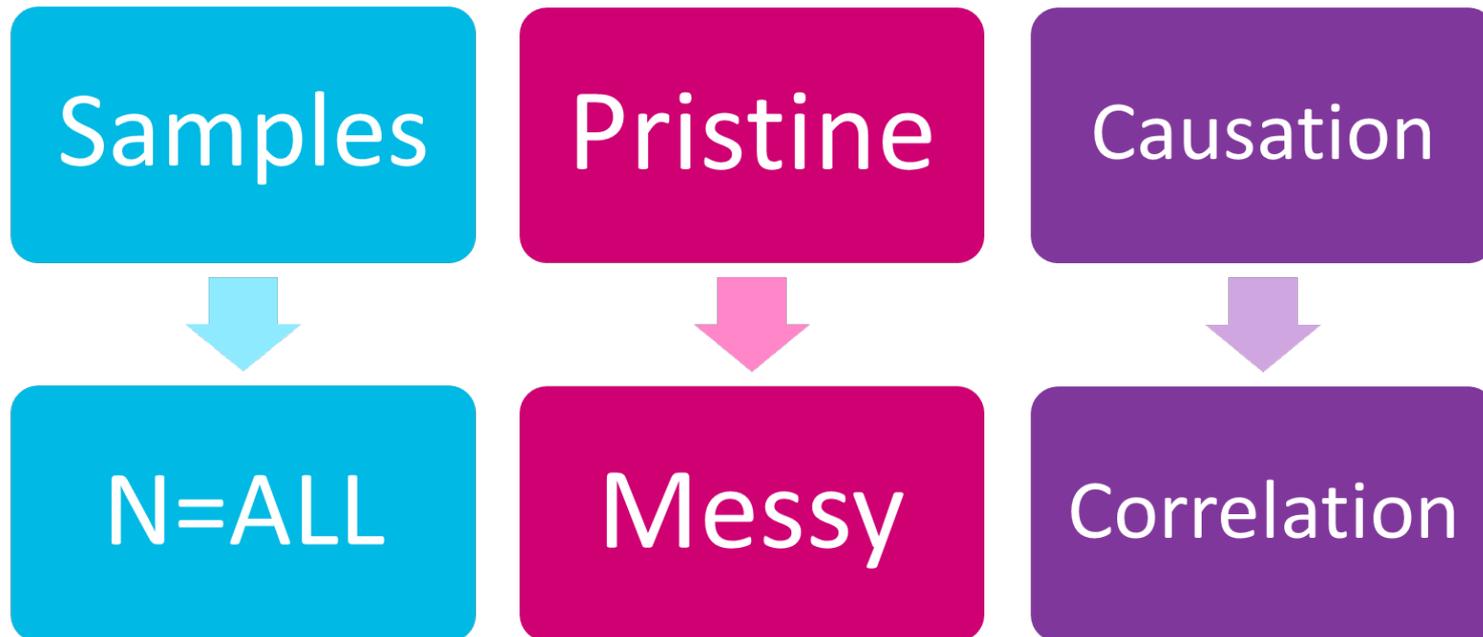
More lives would be saved or improved if people with acute heart failure were routinely treated by specialist heart failure teams.

Early Intervention

The Family Nurse Partnership programme has been shown to be effective in the US for improving children's health and development, with the benefits outweighing the costs by around four to one.

Big data presents a challenge to traditional methods

- The rise of big data - not just about scale, but the 'datafication' of life - requires profound changes in how we approach data:



Adapted from Cukier and Mayer-Schoenberger, *Big Data*



Institutions need to adapt to the challenges – and opportunities

Statistical

- e.g. how do we deal with bias in these new sources?

Technical

- e.g. lots of legacy technology in government, including security

Ethical

- e.g. how do we create rules to ensure our work is trustworthy and good?

Commercial

- e.g. has to be a new business model – public value and commercial benefit

Skills

- e.g. blend of statistics, mining, computing, community needed to unleash potential



But we shouldn't forget what else matters

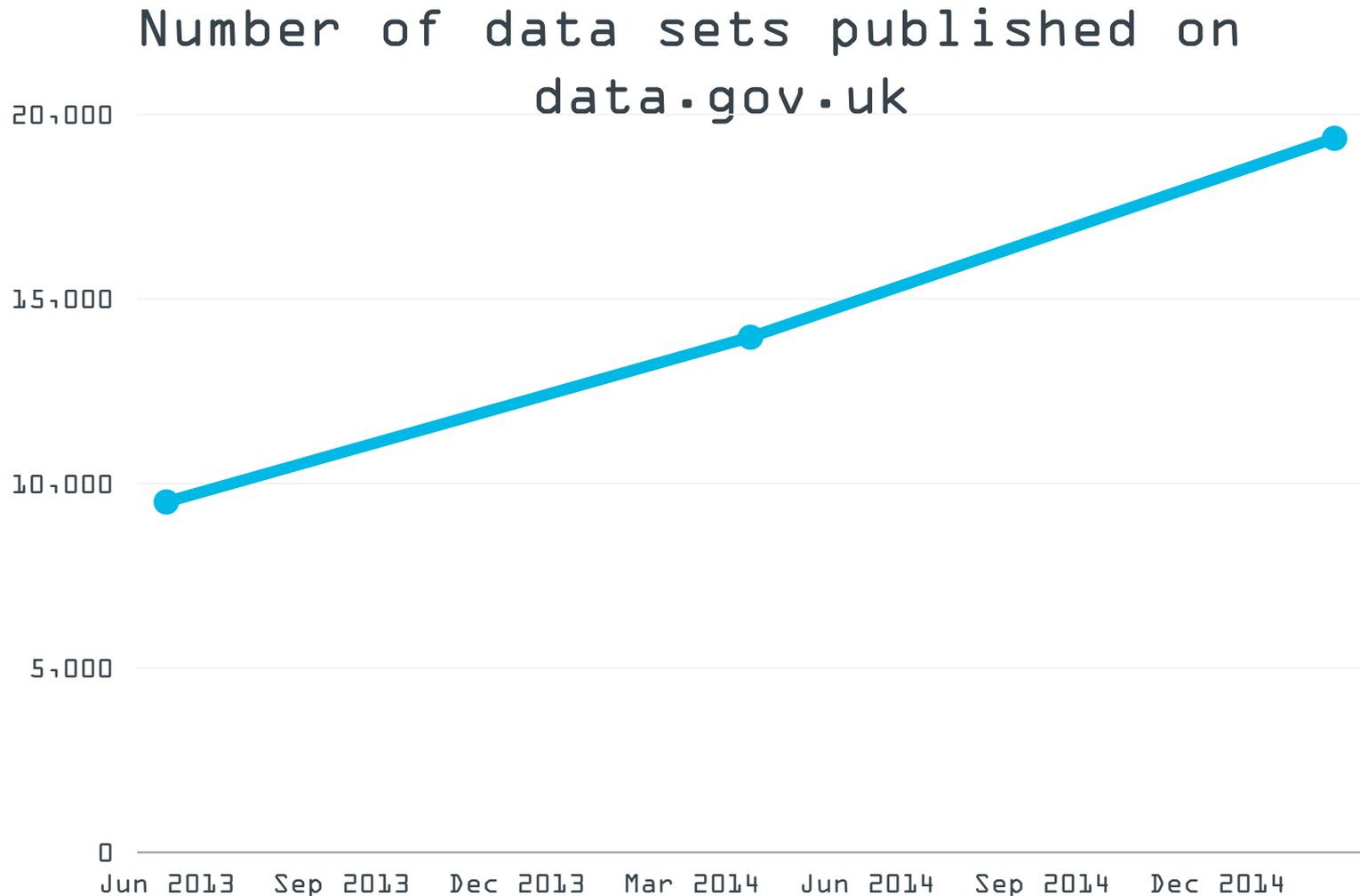
Policy-making

- Clarity on goals
- Open/evidence-based idea generation
- Rigorous policy design
- Responsive external engagement
- Thorough appraisal
- Clarity on roles and accountabilities
- Effective mechanisms for feedback and evaluation

Policy implementation

- Set clear priorities that drive action on the ground
- Get the right people in
- Stay close to the frontline
- Set routines to keep implementation on track

Publishing as open data can improve the quality and usability of evidence



But it needs to be presented in an informative, meaningful way...

Figure 13.2: Usability of departments' impact indicators

Department	Current Score	Open Data	Presentation	Annual Report	Overall
DCLG	Green	Green	Green	Green	1=
DfT	Green	Green	Green	Green	1=
DWP	Green	Green	Green	Green	1=
CO	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	4=
DCMS	Green	Green	Green	Red	4=
HMRC	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	6
DfE	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	7
BIS	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	8
DfID	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	9
DECC	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	10=
DH	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	10=
FCO	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	12
MoJ	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	13
Defra	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	14=
MoD	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	14=
HO	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	16
HMT	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Red	17

Source: Institute for Government analysis of impact indicators and annual reports.

Note: Annual reports for 2013-14 were used where published (DCMS, DfE and MoD use 2012-13).

...and is most powerful when used for a purpose

The StateStat process in Maryland



Before the meeting

- Agencies submit data each month
- StateStat team analyses the data to identify trends, conducts site visits and meets with agency staff to evaluate programmes
- StateStat team turns analysis into detailed executive briefing memos for the StateStat Panel ONLY, which includes the director, the Governor and/or Lt. Governor, the Governor's chief of staff, the Governor's legal counsel, and staff from the Departments of Information Technology and Budget and Management.



At the meeting

- StateStat team presents the analysis, projected onto two screens, to StateStat Panel, and agency leaders and their staff (which might include their secretary and deputy secretaries, human resources, finance, and programme staff)
- StateStat Panel questions agency leaders on the trends identified in the executive briefing memos and works with them to develop solutions
- Agency leaders can use the time to ask for assistance or guidance from the Governor, his senior staff, legal counsel, IT, etc.

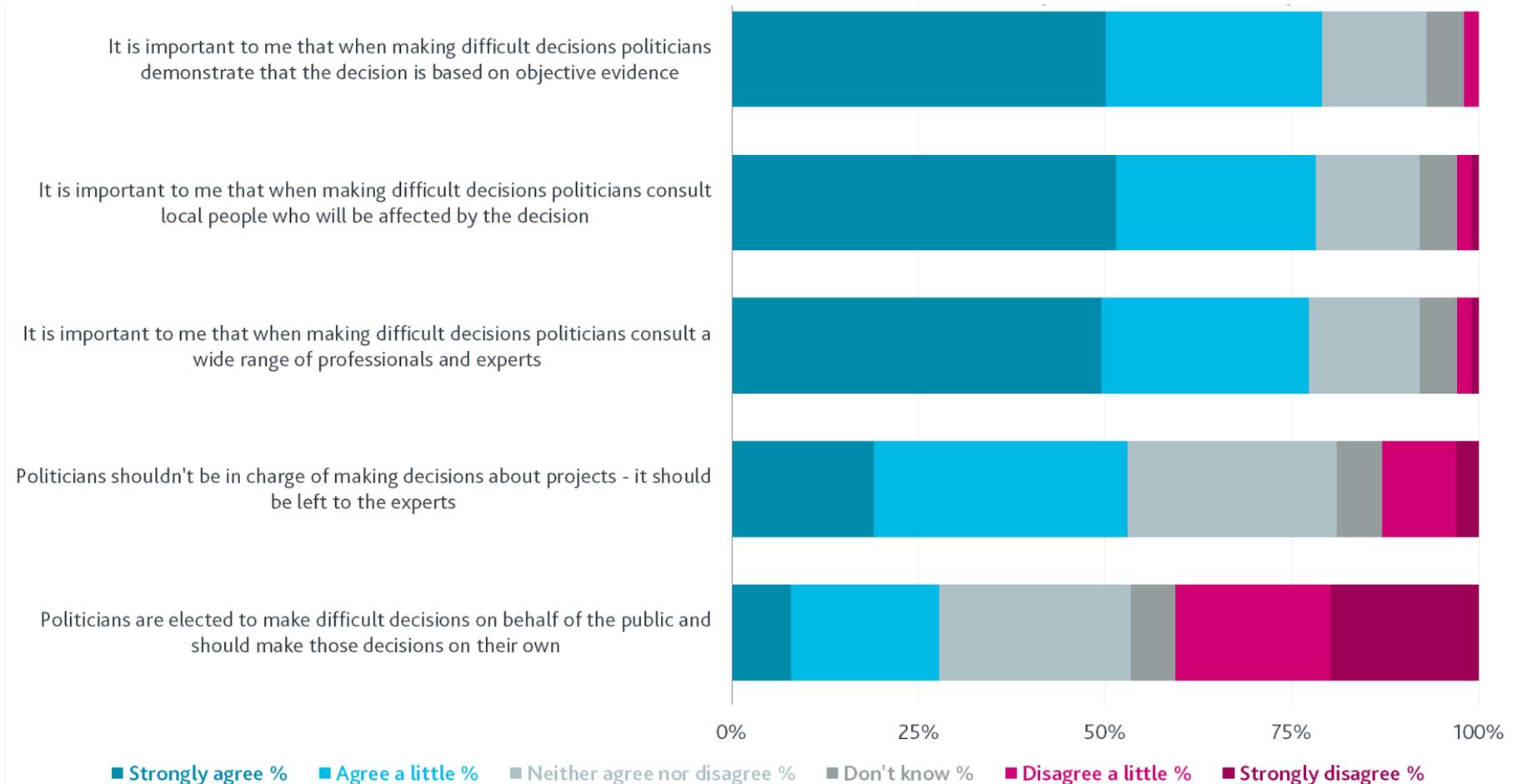


After the meeting

- StateStat team prepares detailed follow-up memos for agencies detailing action items and any other questions or concerns
- Agencies complete and submit the follow-up memos prior to the next StateStat meeting, working closely with StateStat team throughout
- All presentations, summaries, charts and raw data from the meeting are published online, with the StateStat and Maryland Open Data Portal websites providing information on progress against goals and the underlying data.

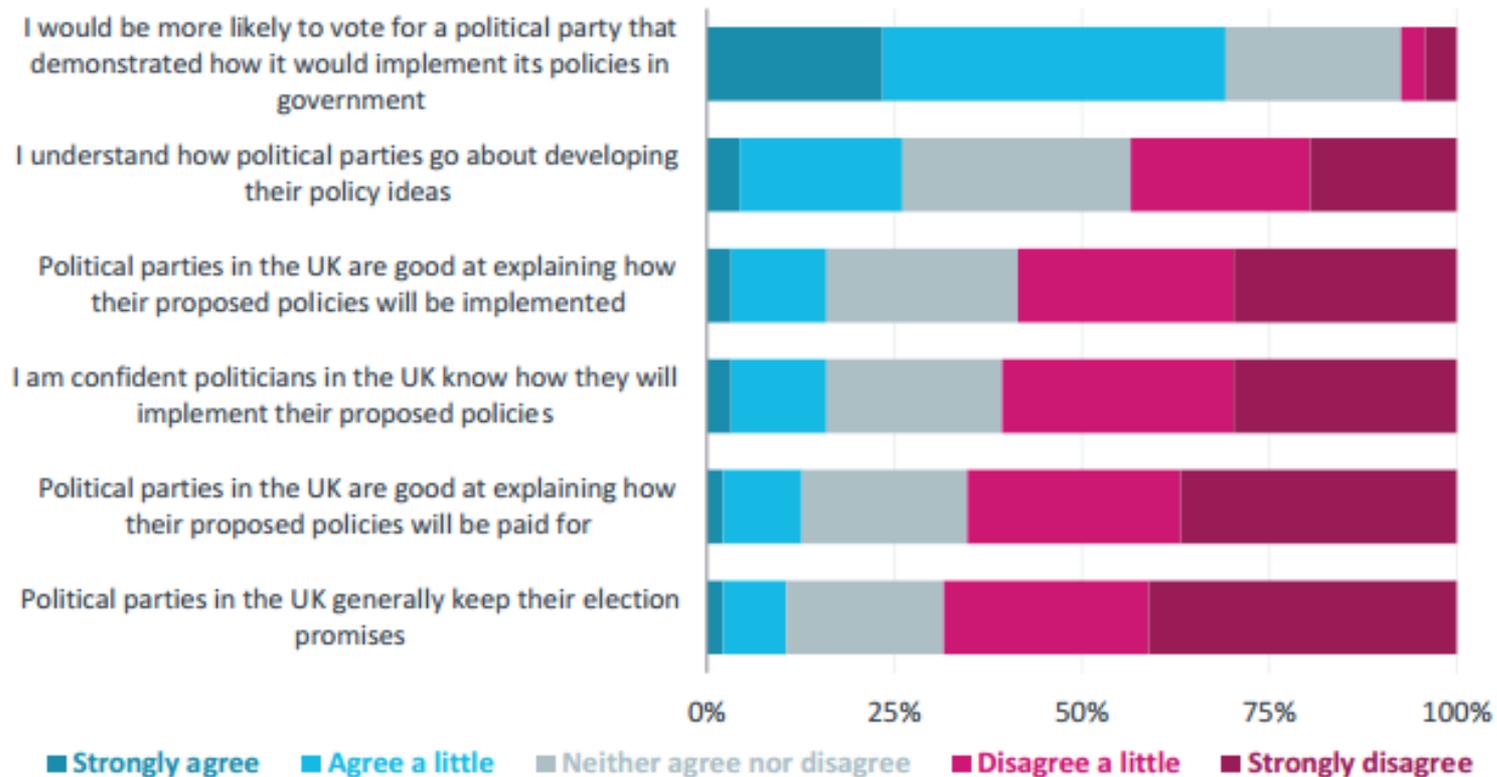
The public wants politicians to use objective evidence...

Politicians often have to make difficult decisions about new infrastructure projects



...and say there may be electoral advantages to using evidence

Figure 14.5: 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?'



Source: Institute for Government/Populus polling, August 2014.