Conclusions

- Evidence can be massively influential...but only in a ‘zone of proximal development’...and generally is poorly deployed.

- Evaluation is getting better?...but still not a truly ‘learning system’.

- Only one of a number of factors...effective change needs more.
About the Strategy Unit

- Serve the PM
- Long-term, cross-departmental view
- Project based
- Evidence based approach
- Mixed teams
I’ll cover...

- Successes and failures?
- What characterises effective use?
- How can we do it better?

... an informal view!
Evidence...

A new golden age?

...or just spray-on cover?
‘Classic’ successes

- Literacy strategy
- Active welfare / new deal
- Early years
- Others: Energy? HE? NICE?
...but then there’s...

- CJS...
- Primary health care?
- Life satisfaction??
What drives impact?

- Evidence exists!
- Someone knows it ... absorptive capacity
- It goes somewhere
- Relationship to public attitudes / interests
- ‘Zone of proximal development’
How can we do it better?

- Work together ...analysts vs. policy
- Encourage experiments / variance
- Be realistic about how knowledge spreads
- Do the groundwork for next-time
- Statistical literacy would be nice
- Talk to others ...let them know questions
- Reform the RAE+?
... and outside the black box

- Evidence used more than you think?
- Keep talking
- Look for the window
- More influence 2 years than 2 weeks?
- Use intermediaries? - contacts matter
- Work inside