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About DfE

The Department for Education (DfE) is responsible for the education and care of children in England. Working at DfE would allow you to contribute to our aim to provide world-class education and care that allows every child and young person to reach his or her potential, regardless of background.

DfE has 12 strategic priorities for the Parliament, which are set out in our Departmental Strategy.

Social Research in DfE

DfE has an ambitious policy agenda, as well as access to some of the most powerful data sources across government, making it an ideal place to be a social researcher.

Our researchers are involved all stages of the policy making process, from contributing evidence inform policy design, to formative action research to understand how changes are being implemented, and ultimately evaluating the impact of our interventions to understand what difference they make, and how we can improve. We value critical analytical thought highly.

DfE’s social research community comprises around 40 staff. Most people are based in London or Sheffield, and we also have a social research presence in Nottingham, Coventry, Manchester and Darlington. There is a culture of multi-disciplinary working in DfE – social researchers work closely with economists, statisticians and operational researchers.

Examples of what DfE social researchers do include:

- Programme evaluations of major government reforms, such as the Step-Up social work qualification scheme.
- Large, fascinating cohort studies such:
  - The Longitudinal Survey for Young People in England 2 – one of the largest and most challenging studies of young people ever commissioned, which tracks a sample of over 13,000 young people from the age of 13/14 annually through to the age of 20.
  - The Study of Early Education and Development – a major longitudinal study which will follow 8,000 two-year-olds from across England to find out how childcare and early education can help to give children the best start in life and what is important for high quality childcare provision.
- International research to benchmark our educational performance against other countries, through the commissioning, management and analysis of studies such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).
- Ensuring the views of pupils and teachers are known and understood, through the regular Teacher and Pupil omnibus surveys.
- Running trials of interventions in schools to understand what works to improve educational performance, or wider outcomes such as health and well-being.