

JONATHAN BRECKON

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CAREER HISTORY

BRECKON CONSULTING LTD

DIRECTOR

March 2021 – present

- Deliver independent advice, research, and training on policy impact for a range of universities, evidence centres, and policy organisations. Roles adapted to partner needs, including fixed-term employment contracts, external consultancy, secondments, and policy fellowships:
 - *Policy Fellow, CAPE (Capabilities in Academic Policy Engagement)*: research and writing reports for Research England-funded CAPE project on best practices and future of university policy engagement. Research involved literature review and interviews of leading knowledge mobilisers in UK in government, universities, local authorities, consultancy, and research funders across UK (and in US, Canada, Australia, and EU).
 - *Thematic Director (Covid Recovery), International Public Policy Observatory*: interviewed senior policy makers across UK, organised and chaired events and drafting reports for UCL-led International Public Policy Observatory that finds, distils, and shares the best global evidence for policy practice across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
 - *Policy Fellow, Parliamentary Office for Science & Technology (UK Parliament)*: delivered training, a CAPE practical guide, templates, and events, based on producing five rapid research reviews – informed by systematic review methods – for Parliamentary select committees. A pilot project for the Research England-funded Capability in Research Engagement (CAPE).
 - *Senior Policy Adviser, Open Innovation Team (HM Government)*. Developed strategy on university research policy engagement with Arms-Length Bodies. Researched briefings for Whitehall based on academic expertise and research. Examples of projects included developing Levelling Up academic engagement and training for civil servants (for Cabinet Office), Digital Accessibility Strategy (for DCMS), and a market foresight analysis on industrial strategy (for North East Local Enterprise Partnership).
 - *Senior Associate, Transforming Evidence*: research on knowledge mobilisation, drafting reports and blogs, organising and chairing public Zoom events, expert advisory groups, and roundtables of senior-leaders in academia, funding, and policy. Topics included: the future of evidence intermediary organisations (see list of publications below); the funding landscape for knowledge mobilisation; and managing politics of policy impact

- *Independent trainer and content creator on knowledge mobilisation.* Developing, designing, and delivering in-person and online training on policy impact and knowledge exchange. Clients include UKRI, Parliamentary Scrutiny Unit, UKRI Future Leaders Network, C40 Global Mayors Network on Climate Change, Motability Foundation, the Canadian Government, and individual UK universities.

ALLIANCE FOR USEFUL EVIDENCE, NESTA

DIRECTOR

March 2012 – Feb 2021

- Internationally recognised leader in the development of evidence institutions and practices for NGOs, frontline professional staff, central and local government.
- Designed a new Evidence Masterclass training programme for policymakers. Created and piloted content and won funding to be the sole provider for the Masterclasses for UK Civil Service Policy Profession, delivered to over 30 UK government departments and arms-length bodies, and others such as House of Commons Scrutiny Unit, and the Pew Trust in Washington D.C., and the Civil Service College Singapore
- Created, scoped, and developed new What Works and other evidence intermediary centres, including: Access to Justice Lab; Nuffield Foundation's Family Justice Observatory; Transforming Access to Student Outcomes in Higher Education Centre; What Works Wellbeing; What Works for Children's Social Care. Co-founded with Professor Michael Sanders, the Evidence Quarter in Whitehall, a new home to host What Works Centres and other evidence institutions.
- Won external research funding from grants and consultancy totalling £8.5m from government and foundations, including the Economic and Social Research Council, Research England, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Carnegie UK Trust, Wellcome Trust, and others.
- Researched and wrote over 20 thought-leadership guides, reports, toolkits, position statements, and book chapters (see selection of publications below). For example, *Using Research Evidence; A Practical Guide* (Breckon, 2016) – which has been adapted for local authorities (with SOLACE/Centre for Public Scrutiny), for humanitarian aid sector (with Evidence Aid and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine), and translated into French and Spanish.
- Led a systematic review and guide on how to encourage research uptake. The model has been adopted by the College of Policing and Money and Pensions Service in UK, W.T. Grant Foundation in US, and Human and Social Sciences Research Council in South Africa.

ARTS AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL

DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Oct 2008 - Nov 2011

- Lead on research and public policy, communications, public affairs, and evaluation. Managed team of 12. Member of Senior Management Team with collective responsibility for: £110m budget and 5-year strategy; governance with Chair, Council and Advisory Board; reporting to Ministers and BEIS.

- Created a new policy engagement strategy and research partnerships across government agencies, including the Department of Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS); Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Department for Communities and Local Government; and Ministry of Justice. Set up a Fellowship programme with ESRC for researchers to work inside government departments and other policy organisations, including Cabinet Office, DCMS, Institute for Government, and the Security Services.

ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

HEAD OF POLICY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

April 2003 - Nov 2008

- Responsible for influencing public policy on geographical research – covering physical and human geography – for the learned society and professional body for geography.
- Devised new formal advisory roles to a range of partners, including: the Home Office Independent Advisory Group on Country Information; Secretary of State for Schools; the House of Commons Education Select Committee.

BRITISH ACADEMY

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

JAN 2000 – APRIL 2003

- The national academy for the humanities and social sciences with over 1,300 Fellows providing independent and authoritative advice, research funding, publications, and a forum for debate.
- Led on external research engagement and built strong relationships with universities, funding bodies including ESRC, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Leverhulme, and others. Set up a series of sell-out public debates and lectures, such as with Nobel Prize winners Amartya Sen, former World Bank Chief Economist Joseph Stiglitz, political scientist Robert D. Putnam and others.

ADVISORY, GOVERNANCE AND PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

2021 - present

- Fellow

UKRI RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2021

2020 - 2022

- Impact Assessor, sub-panel 19, Politics and International Relations

STIRLING UNIVERSITY

2019 – present

- Honorary Professor, School of History, Heritage, and Social Science

THE POLICY INSTITUTE, KINGS COLLEGE LONDON

2018 - present

- Visiting Senior Research Fellow

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

2020 - present

- Visiting Fellow, Campbell Collaboration UK and Ireland

WHAT WORKS FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

2019 - 2021

- Trustee and Founding Board member

EDUCATION

St George's, University of London/Kingston University

2019 - present

PhD. Evidence-Based Policy and Practice (part-time)

School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
1997

1995 -

MSc. International Politics

Goldsmiths' College, University of London
1994

1991 -

BSc. Psychology (2:1)

SELECTION OF RELEVANT RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND BLOGS

Breckon, J., & Boaz, A. (2023). *Evidence Intermediary Organisations: Moving beyond a definitional morass*. Transforming Evidence.

Breckon, J., & Boaz, A. (2023). How did we get here? What Works in the UK? A personal journey. In *The What Works Centres* (pp. 12–26). Policy Press.

Breckon, J., Oliver, S., & Vindrola, C. (2023). *Rapid Evidence Assessments: A guide for commissioners, funders, and policymakers* - CAPE. CAPE, University College London.

Breckon, J. (2022). Communicating and using systematic reviews—Learning from other disciplines. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 18(4), e1294.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1294>

Breckon, J. (2022, April 27). *Quick, but not dirty – can rapid evidence reviews reliably inform policy?* [Online resource]. LSE Impact of Social Sciences Blog; LSE

Breckon, J., Sarah Chaytor, & Kayleigh Renberg-Fawcett. (2022, November 21). Does the UK need an observatory for university engagement with policymakers? *Times Higher Education*.

Sanders, M., & Breckon, J. (2023). *The What Works Centres: Lessons and Insights from an Evidence Movement*. Policy Press.

Breckon, J., & Puttick, R. (2021). *Quality in qual; How to commission, judge, and generate good qualitative evaluation* London: What Works Wellbeing

Bakhshi, H., Breckon, J., & Puttick, R. (2021). Understanding R&D in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. *Journal of the British Academy*, 9, 115–145.

Breckon, J., Taylor-Collins, E. Why evidence matters. In Teixeira, L. (Ed.). (2020). *Using Evidence to End Homelessness*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press.

Breckon, J., Rickey, A., & Mthiyane, H. (2019). *Evidence vs Democracy: How 'mini-publics' can traverse the gap between citizens, experts, and evidence*. London, UK: Nesta

Breckon, J., Gough, D. Using evidence in the UK. In Boaz, A. et al (2019). *What Works Now?: Evidence-informed policy and practice*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press