

3.2 Four types of decision-maker and how each may approach decisions

The Evidence Commission focuses on four types of decision-makers. Each type of decision-maker may approach decisions in different ways. Here we provide an example of an approach used by each type, recognizing that this approach may be complemented by others (e.g., government policymakers also play a role in supporting decision-making by others, including by funding or ‘building’ the evidence used by them).



Government policymakers

Need to be convinced there’s a compelling problem, a viable policy and conducive politics



Organizational leaders

(e.g., business and non-governmental organization leaders)

Need a business case to offer goods and services



Professionals

(e.g., doctors, engineers, police officers, social workers and teachers)

Need the opportunity, motivation and capability to make a professional decision or to work with individual clients to make shared decisions



Citizens

(e.g., patients, service users, voters and community leaders)

Need the opportunity, motivation and capability to make a personal decision, take local action or build a social movement

People wear multiple ‘hats’ and may have experience in multiple roles. For example, a government policymaker is also a citizen, may have trained in the past as a doctor or teacher, and may have led a non-governmental organization before being elected or appointed to government.

As we’ll come to in chapter 4, using evidence is not ‘rocket science.’ Two randomized-controlled trials in Uganda showed that school children (ages 10 to 12 years) and their parents can be taught to assess the reliability of health-treatment claims and make well-informed decisions.(2; 3)