



**Bournemouth
University**

Research informed policy

How to make your research count with policy makers

- What have you got and what do you want to do with it?
- How do you make your research count (1)?
- What do policy makers want?
- How does policy get made?
- How do you make your research count (2)?
- Ways to influence policy
- Task
- What help is available?
- Further reading and resources

What do you want to tell policy makers about?

What do you have?

Published research

An on-going research project

An idea for a new research project building on previous work

A new idea for research

What do you want?

To change policy for a specific purpose

To influence against a proposed change

Build reputation and generate publicity

Find potential partners or funders

How do you make your research count (1)?

There is lots of advice on how to present things and engage with policy makers

BUT policy makers are only interested in things that are relevant and current to them

SO before getting stuck into the detail of how to engage, you need to think about what they want

What do policy makers want?

Government

- want help to deliver their promises and address matters of national priority

What have they promised to deliver?

Look at the manifesto of the parties and the promises that they have made since

Opposition and others

- want information that will help them influence policy to support their own views

What are the hot topics?

What is government being given a hard time about at the moment?

All

- individuals will have their own national and local priorities driven by personal interests, constituency priorities and their political roles

What is the rest of Parliament up to?

What are the Lords debating and what are select committees doing?

What are other relevant stakeholders already lobbying about?

How are they getting on?

Bigger picture

- When will your research matter to the policy-maker? (manifesto building, at time of a crisis if you can offer a solution).
- Not always one particular time frame or moment- relationship building over time- leading up to a certain point can be critical.
- If there isn't an obvious time- 'back-pocket' your research - it will be even more useful when the issue re-emerges.

Day-to-day

- Check to see their Parliamentary activity and the media for the week/month- are they preoccupied?
- More politicians are likely to be in Westminster on Monday-Wednesday and in their constituency later in the week.

How does a bill turn into a statute?



HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

www.parliament.uk/get-involved

Passage of a Bill



How to interact at each stage?

Second reading

- **Debate on the principles of the Bill – often very shortly after Bill first published (10 days)**
- On the floor of the House, debate can take several hours
- All MPs can participate
- Vote at the end – challenge to principle of Bill
- Very rare for the government to lose these
- **By publishing and sharing material ahead of this, views will be represented in the HoC briefing materials**

Committee stage

- **Scrutiny by debate and amendment by the Public Bill Committee**
- Members are interested parties and balanced across the parties – who are they?
- Can take oral and written evidence – need to watch out for calls for evidence
- Amendments tabled by members but can be suggested by others
- **By responding to calls for evidence and making sure members are aware of your materials, your research may be taken into account**

Report and third reading

- **Report stage - amended bill debated on floor of the House. All MPs can speak and vote.**
- Amendments can be made and discussed – only new ones - may be purely formal stage
- **Third reading** - straight after report stage – further debate but no amendment
- **This is the time that other MPs or peers not involved in the PBC may influence the bill – how do you get your research in front of them?**

And in the Lords?

After the HoC stages the Bill passes to the other House and goes through broadly the same process

- Both Houses must agree on the text of a Bill
- If a Bill is amended in the second House it returns to the first House for consideration of amendments
- The first House can reject the amendments, make changes to them, or suggest alternatives.

Some Bills may start in the Lords

- **Second reading (one day)** - principles of the bill are debated. **Committee of the Whole House (most frequently used – between 4-10 days)**
- Line by line scrutiny where all peers debate and vote in the main chamber.
- **Report stage (over several days)** - gives all members of the Lords a further opportunity to make amendments.
- **Third reading (one to three days)** - unlike the House of Commons, amendments can be made at third reading if it is a new issue.

How do you make your research count (2)?

You need to plan

- You can't assume that when your research is ready there will be an [audience](#) for it
- What opportunities might be coming up, or how can you start early to create opportunities?

You need to be flexible

- Attention spans are short and things move on quickly
- Be opportunistic – if something comes up in the [news](#) or a consultation or inquiry is launched – strike while the iron is hot

You need to make it easy

- Attention spans are short and they have lots of competing priorities
- Why does it matter, what does the research show and what is the recommendation – and why is it credible and worth listening to?

What if your research relates to something that isn't a hot topic?

Are you working on something that is not on the national radar but should be?

- Do you have an idea that could make a huge difference but that needs wider engagement, maybe even partners or funding?
- Are you working on an evolving area that needs a long term plan?

There is no silver bullet – publicity and engagement with policy makers will help but MPs can't fund projects

The advice is very similar:

- You need to plan – you can't assume that when your research is ready there will be an audience for it
- You need to make it easy for them - be clear about what you are asking for
- You need to be flexible - find those who naturally engage with your project and work out how they might want to engage

Ways to influence policy



Collaborate with other organisations



Meetings with key policy-makers



Briefings



Consultations



Parliamentary activities



Select committee inquiries

Exercise: how would you try and influence policy?

Lariam and Dementia

The media have picked up that the anti-malarial drug *Lariam* has been associated with devastating long-term side-effects, including depression and anxiety.

Research that you and your team have carried out, has also identified that Lariam may be a contributor to early onset dementia- although this has not been mentioned in the press.

So far, the government has responded to the claims by setting up an inquiry by the Health Committee. The government is looking for written evidence on the health issues associated with Lariam, with the view on possibly changing their policy around Lariam usage.

How do you intend to influence the government's policy on the use of Lariam?

Your case studies

- Do you have any case studies based on your work?
- Do you have any immediate questions about influencing policy?

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You can find us on Talbot campus on the 5th Floor of Poole House in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor.

Further reading and resources

- [Policy and Public Affairs webpages](#)
- <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/plan-it/who-engage-with/policy-makers>
- <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/Funding/Public-engagement/Engagement-with-your-research/Support-and-resources/Government-and-science-policy/WTS040403.htm>
- www.bournemouth.ac.uk/impact-toolkit
- <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2013/dec/02/scientists-policy-governments-science>
- <http://wonkhe.com/blogs/policy-watch-he-bill-parliament/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/science/political-science/2016/apr/27/if-scientists-want-to-influence-policymaking-they-need-to-understand-it>