Evidence Week in Holyrood

senseaboutscience.org/evidence-week-holyrood
The work of Holyrood creates a far-ranging need to use and scrutinise evidence, from economic forecasts to environmental monitoring. In a single day MSPs may have to navigate complex policy issues such as homelessness, rural deprivation and indeed the pandemic, while approving measures to counter climate change and investigating the diverse issues affecting their constituents.

Evidence Week presents a unique opportunity for parliamentarians, researchers and the public to come together to discuss the evidence that underpins important policy decisions. Scottish voters will get to put their questions directly to a panel of influential policymakers, with MSPs receiving rapid-fire briefings from world-leading researchers on issues including climate change, homelessness and inequality in Scotland, and the use of personal health and social data.

Evidence matters to people, and our representatives must be able to use it and scrutinise important decisions and policies. MSPs do not need a scientific background to scrutinise evidence, but must be empowered to ask the right questions. Evidence Week creates the environment and networks to support them in this vital work.

Welcome

- Tracey Brown OBE, director of Sense about Science.
“Just as evidence-based policy development is important, so too is evidence-based scrutiny and law-making. These are key roles for the Scottish Parliament, and SPICe supports Evidence Week as an opportunity to shine a light on them.”

- Graeme Cook, SPICe at the Scottish Parliament

“The pandemic has shown us the benefits of doing data right, doing data together, and doing data better. Faster analysis and evidence gathering to support decision-making means better outcomes can be delivered more quickly to Scotland’s citizens.”

- Professor Roger Halliday, Chief Statistician of the Scottish Government & CEO at Research Data Scotland
Sense about Science has partnered with SPICe at The Scottish Parliament, RDS and ADR Scotland, to deliver Evidence Week in Holyrood on 21-25 March 2022. Opening with voters’ questions about how MSPs use and scrutinise evidence, the week will provide rapid-fire briefings from cutting-edge research on Scottish policy issues.

Responding to requests from Scottish voters and from within Holyrood we are bringing the unique format of Evidence Week, which has been successful in parliaments in the EU, UK, and Ireland, to the Scottish Parliament. For the first time, MSPs will join researchers, and constituents to discuss how the evidence used to make policy decisions in Scotland is scrutinised.

People from across Scotland will put their questions directly to a panel of influential policymakers, with MSPs briefed by world-leading researchers on pressing policy matters. Not only will legislators discuss issues including climate change, homelessness and inequality in Scotland, and the use of health and social data – but they will be empowered to engage with policy evidence. Rapid-fire sessions, meetings, and workshops will equip MSPs and their staff with the critical tools to deal with uncertainty, monitor the progress of policies, and measure the effectiveness of proposals, to better hold government policymaking to account.
OPENING EVENT PUBLIC DISCUSSION
21st March | 17:00 – 18:30
Join us and your constituents for the opening of Evidence Week with a panel of MSPs and experts answering questions submitted by constituents on the evidence behind the policies that matter to them. Join here: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82508915174

PERSONAL SPEED BRIEFINGS
21st - 25th March | 09:00-17:00
Book an online meeting with world-leading researchers on pressing policy issues, at a time that suits you, or watch their 3 minute speed briefings here: senseaboutscience.org/evidence-week-holyrood/policy-briefings

DOING DATA BETTER PANEL DISCUSSION
22nd March | 15:00-16:00
Panel discussion chaired by Roger Halliday, hosted by RDS and ADR Scotland | Doing data better for policy and the public good. Register: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83336010765
Strengthening Scotland’s evidence base for equality data

Effective policy making relies on extensive up to date data on the issue being addressed, and the people you are trying to affect. Hear from the Scottish Government Equality Analysis Team about the importance of their Equality Data Improvement Programme (EDIP) in developing inclusive policy, and the barriers to collecting, analysing and reporting equality data.

A just energy transition: practical tools for embedding energy justice into policy making

A radical transition to Net Zero could amplify inequalities across society, if justice is not embedded into policy and decision making. Join UKRI researchers to learn about their POINTs tool, which can translate the concept of a Just Transition of the energy system into a practical guide for policymakers, enabling them to examine the energy justice implications of proposed policies and future decisions.

Data to create effective crime, justice and equality policy

Crime does not affect all people and places equally, and understanding these patterns is essential in directing valuable resources where they are needed most. Explore how ADR Scotland Administrative Data Infrastructure can be used by policymakers to understand, link and share data effectively, and support effective decision making.
Climate finance for a just transition in Scotland: making Net Zero a reality

COP26 in Glasgow set out the plan we need to follow if we are to prevent climate change from destroying the world as we know it. Now we need to finance this plan. The Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment will set out why it is imperative that public and private finance collaborate in funding the initiatives needed to ensure a realistic transition to Net Zero.

How to monitor the impact of Scottish policy on new refugee homelessness and integration

Refugees can remain impoverished even after they are granted asylum in the UK. Scotland has effectively tackled new refugee homelessness through devolved policies, and it is time that the rest of the UK learned from Scotland's example. Hear how specific monitoring techniques have allowed the University of Sheffield to assess the impact of Scotland's decisions, and will provide the evidence needed to spur change across the whole UK.

Improving the diversity of people studying and working in physics

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is coming. The world needs the finest minds in physics to take on challenges posed by this and issues such as climate change. It is critical that physics is accessible to everyone and that we champion diversity and inclusivity to ensure Scottish excellence in physics is safeguarded into the future.
How to effectively use data systems to improve child and maternal health inequalities

Health inequalities emerge early in life and can have lifelong or even generational effects. See how administrative data can identify groups most at risk of health inequalities and how the Scottish Government can monitor ongoing impacts of child and maternal health policy, in its commitment to ensuring the best start in life for every child in Scotland.

Creating an evidence base to end homelessness

Reducing and preventing homelessness has been declared a ‘National Priority’ in Scotland. The Centre for Homelessness Impact will present their evidence base of cost-effective interventions in identifying what works to end homelessness, how to scale up effective interventions and when to stop those that offer poor value.
“The last two years have clearly illustrated the crucial interplay of science and policy making, and the importance of robust data and scientific evidence in helping shape Government policy.”

- Siobhian Brown MSP, Convener of the COVID-19 Recovery Committee

“Our collective experience over the last two years has emphasised the crucial importance of evidence-based policymaking in all aspects of public life. Scientific research is at the heart of an evidence driven approach to policy and scrutiny and must be valued and supported by politicians at every opportunity.”

- Martin Whitfield MSP, Convener of the Standards and Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

“Working with public petitions requires us to form a view on a wide range of issues, many of which are scientifically complex. Seeking out evidence-based, impartial information is a crucial part of that process. It reassures petitioners and other stakeholders that we are taking the issues they are raising seriously and, as Parliamentarians, it provides us with the knowledge and expertise we need to confidently make decisions about what to do next.”

- Jackson Carlaw MSP, Convener of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee
Research Data Scotland and ADR Scotland

Combining specialists in the Scottish Government’s Data for Research Unit and the expertise of academic researchers at the Scottish Centre for Administrative Data Research, this partnership between Research Data Scotland and ADR Scotland is transforming how public sector data in Scotland is curated, accessed and explored in policymaking and for the public. Join Research Data Scotland and ADR Scotland for their event ‘Doing Data Better for Policy and the Public Good’, on Tuesday 22nd March 2022.

SPICe at The Scottish Parliament

SPICe (Scottish Parliament Information Centre) is the Scottish Parliament’s internal research centre. They provide impartial, factual, accurate and timely information and analysis. As information and subject specialists on a range of policy issues, the SPICe team carry out research on behalf of the Parliament’s committees, Members, and Parliament staff. SPICe are responsible for maintaining and publishing parliamentary data and information, while also helping to commission and manage research from external providers.

Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) and UK Statistics Authority (UKSA)

Statistics are vital to help inform decisions made by a wider group of organisations, including charities, researchers, trade unions, businesses and community groups, and statistics help those civil society organisations hold governments to account. The Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) supports confidence in statistics by addressing harms and making sure that statistics serve the public good. The UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) provides oversight of the whole statistical system, promoting and safeguarding the production of official statistics.
Sense about Science is an independent charity that promotes the public interest in sound science and evidence. It is the co-author with the Institute for Government of the Transparency of Evidence Framework, whose principles are now captured in the Treasury green book for policymaking. Sense about Science has led two transparency reviews of evidence used by government departments in 2016 and 2018.

https://senseaboutscience.org/

“Our role as MSPs is to scrutinise policy and legislation and in doing so understand its purpose and rationale. Evidence is therefore vital to examine whether measures are working as intended. Events such as Evidence Week play an important role in bringing together researchers and policy makers to share their knowledge and help us in our scrutiny.”

- Stephen Kerr MSP, Convener of the Education, Children and Young People Committee