EVIDENCE WEEK

Upper Waiting Hall, Parliament and Online

1st–5th November 2021
This past year has shown starkly the importance of Parliament understanding evidence. Covid-19 is just one thing on MPs evidence-heavy agendas which involves looking at conflicting models of hospital numbers and then debating regional support for electric cars in the morning, and advocating for post-Brexit national food safety rules and raising post-16 literacy rates in the afternoon. Parliament acts both to scrutinise decisions on behalf of voters and as an early warning on how those decisions are affecting the country. This makes big demands of MPs to access and understand evidence quickly.

This is why Evidence Week in Parliament opens with the questions that are animating communities and constituents; and it continues with two days of 3-minute briefings on the cutting-edge research that can help equip MPs and peers to use and challenge evidence for important issues and decisions. With research partners from across the UK, we bring some of the best expertise and new tools and insights of 2021 to the questions that will face Parliament in the year ahead, such as creating digital twins for renewing city infrastructure and identifying unsafe buildings, new evidence on improving employment prospects, and better use of physics in public health responses. Evidence Week brings constituents, researchers and Parliament together to ensure something very important for our democracy: that we are equipped with the best evidence to tackle the challenges ahead.
A lot has changed over the last two years. As the world grappled with Covid-19, so did Parliament. Like other workplaces during the pandemic, the House of Commons changed the way it conducted business. Hybrid proceedings allowed MPs to take part online and in person.

‘We hope to see you there and together show people all over the UK that evidence matters.’

At the House of Commons Library and POST (the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology), some of our dedicated staff remained on the Westminster estate to provide essential face-to-face services. Many more worked tirelessly from home – answering requests for research, conducting bespoke policy analysis, providing training to Members’ staff, and publishing hundreds of briefings for Parliamentarians – to make sure they could continue to support their constituents and scrutinise the work of Government.

This year, we are excited to partner with Sense about Science in delivering an innovative hybrid programme for Evidence Week 2021. In Westminster, a physical event will complement last year’s online format.

- Penny Young, House of Commons Librarian and Managing Director of Research and Information.

Evidence should always inform policy. Gathering evidence requires capable research. The last 18 months have shown the importance of scientific research and evidence but also that it is not always uniform, but can be varying and contested. This challenge is important because only with evidence can theories be tested. Evidence week is a great opportunity to bring together the public, parliamentarians, and researchers to share knowledge and insights.

- Greg Clark MP, Chair of the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee.
This year, Evidence Week will be taking place **online 1st - 5th Nov** and **in Upper Waiting Hall 2nd - 3rd Nov** within Parliament.

Evidence Week in Westminster is an opportunity to bring together the public, researchers and parliamentarians to discuss how evidence is used in policymaking. Evidence matters to people in many walks of life, from how allotment space is allocated in local areas, to the use of data science in healthcare.

Evidence is crucial in effective decision making, so it is essential that parliamentarians are equipped with the skills and know-how to effectively scrutinise UK Government policy, in order to hold government to account.

During Evidence Week, we will hear from constituents on why evidence matters and the issues that are important to them. Researchers and academics, who are experts in their field, will give short briefings on the available evidence and how it can support Members of Parliament to make better decisions for their constituents. It is crucial for parliamentarians to know when to ask for and how to communicate the unknowns, the effectiveness of a policy or how to monitor the effects of a policy.

To round out Evidence Week, we will bring together parliamentary staff with evidence experts in a training event to help staff understand and use effectively the huge variety of evidence they come across through their work.

“Rigorous evidence is an essential part of policymaking.”

*Chi Onwurah, MP*
OPENING EVENT

ONLINE
1st November | 17:00 – 18:30
Join us for the opening of Evidence Week and access all of our online events at: senseaboutscience.org/evidence-week/program-event/opening-event

3-MINUTE BRIEFINGS

ONLINE
1st - 5th November | 09:00-17:00
Book an online briefing with one of our researchers at a time that suits you. For more info on briefings and scheduling a call, visit: senseaboutscience.org/evidence-week/policy-briefings

IN PERSON
2nd November | 10:00–17:00
3rd November | 10:00–17:00
Visit our booths in person in Upper Waiting Hall in Parliament for a 3-minute briefing with one of our researchers.

OTHER EVENTS

ONLINE
2nd November | 13:00-14:00
Panel discussion hosted by Centre for Homelessness Impact | Are we on track to end rough sleeping in England by 2024?

5th November | 13:00-15:30
Parliamentary Staff Training hosted by ONS, Ipsos MORI, Making Sense of Risk Project | Using Scientific evidence, research data and resources to support your MP

IN PERSON
3rd November | 10:00-12:00
Guided tour in the Attlee Suite in Parliament hosted by CompBioMed | Bringing virtual humans to UK healthcare

Thank you once again to the members of the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee for supporting Evidence Week in Westminster 2021
“As we have seen over the last 18 months, the use of reliable and validated evidence in the decision making process is more important than ever. Policy makers are often presented with conflicting information when trying to formulate policy but trusted, scientifically valid evidence should always weigh heavily in that process. At times, it may be the case that evidence cannot be fully incorporated but that is not to say we should discredit it because we have other more pressing considerations which science alone cannot address or incorporate. However, wherever possible, scientific evidence in all its guises should form a key part of the process and it should be respected for its rigour and the underlying principles from which it was derived.”

- Stephen Metcalfe MP
Contribution Of Physics To Net Zero

Tackling climate change requires several interventions in different areas of energy production to reduce carbon emissions. Physics is at the heart of driving the development of new crucial low-carbon technologies to help the UK achieve Net Zero.

How To Work Out The UK’s Geothermal Energy Potential

Beneath our feet is enough energy to heat thousands of homes using zero carbon. Find out the potential of geothermal energy, and how it can help contribute to the UK’s decarbonisation efforts.

Reliable Data About Our Food Supply

Trustworthy data is crucial for food supply chains. University of Lincoln in partnership with the FSA have created a framework that enables reliable transactions and better data exchange for the industry. Explore the methods behind this innovation.

How To Generate Evidence When Little Is Known – Insights From The Pandemic

The NIHR contributed to the UK’s world leading response to the pandemic, and their recovery trials produced information on what treatments do and don’t work. Come and learn more about how the NIHR uses research to shape policy and answer questions on uncertainty.

Monitor Antimicrobial Resistance In The Environment

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) could be the next global threat. We are now finding resistant microbes in previously undiscovered locations. This briefing lays out ways to tackle this issue and describes effective monitoring systems that need to be put in place.
The Basis Of Public Support For Climate Policies

The public understand the need to tackle climate change, but public acceptance of policies such as carbon tax can be problematic and hard to convey. Learn about factors that can enhance the public acceptability of climate policies.

Digital Copies Of Our Cities To Predict When Infrastructure Fails

Repairs and maintenance of infrastructure such as bridges are costly and time-consuming. Creating a ‘digital twin’ allows us to model the outcomes of different scenarios to help prevent unexpected issues.

See the Harwell Net Zero Living Laboratory

To achieve the goal of Net Zero, cutting edge research needs to be developed alongside industry experts to enable roll out of new technologies. The Harwell campus is pioneering collaborative efforts to develop and deliver novel energy technologies.

Monitor Whether Industry Supply Chains Are Decarbonising

Industry supply chains account for 40% of global carbon dioxide emissions. Learn how progress is, and can be, made in reducing the carbon footprint of supply chains without increasing costs for the consumer.

Youth Employment Prospects After Mental Health Problems

Poor mental health at a young age can have a devastating effect on a person’s potential employment and earnings later in life. Some kinds of interventions can affect this.
The Data Needed To Simulate Remanufacturing

Re-manufacturing is key in achieving a circular economy and reducing emissions to reach Net Zero. Data science allows the identification of efficient processes for carbon reduction and generating social-economic benefits.

Power And Plants Microbes That Can Combat Climate Change

Resistant crops that require fewer pesticides and fertilizers mean less carbon is used in the food supply chain. Learn how crops are being made to withstand harsher environments.

An Evidence Base To End Homelessness

The What Works Centre for Homelessness Impact has developed an Intervention Tool that weighs up the strength of evidence, fiscal cost and impact of policies implemented to tackle homelessness. Using high quality evidence we may be able to finally end homelessness.

Personalised Medical Data To Revolutionise Healthcare

We already collect different types of data to guide the treatment of patients. Through imaging, digitalisation and simulations, these datasets can now be combined to identify the best treatments and shape healthcare delivery.
Thank You

Sense about Science is grateful for the support of our lead partner the **Institute of Physics**, as well as **POST, House of Commons Library, OSR, UKSA, Ipsos MORI** and our **Evidence Week Pod Partners** (pages 7-9).

**IOP** Institute of Physics

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Office for Statistics Regulation

House of Commons Library

Ipsos MORI

UK Parliament POST

UK Statistics Authority

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Evidence Week 2021
senseaboutscience.org/evidence-week
#EvidenceWeek
“This past year has shown the stark necessity of good data and evidence for robust decision-making. As the echo-chamber of social media gets bigger, and the voices within louder, it is essential that parliamentarians have access to high quality data, and also the people who can explain it to them and help them turn that evidence into robust policy. Evidence Week is an essential tool to helping us do just that.”

-Simon Fell MP

“The past two years have re-emphasised just how important science is to our modern world. Having access to the most recent scientific data helps lawmakers better scrutinise government and respond to the ever-changing nature of public policy.”

-Gerald Jones MP

“My role as an MP is to scrutinise the decisions of the UK Government as well as to consider, and understand, issues that affect my constituents in Ceredigion. In times of increasing populism and contestation in politics, I need no convincing that receiving reliable information is vital to ensure well-informed policy-making. Evidence Week has played an important role in recent years in making sure that MPs have access to the best tools and information to hold the government to account.”

- Ben Lake MP