Evidence Week in Parliament 2022
14th – 18th November, Westminster

esenseaboutscience/evidence-week
Introduction

It would be a normal day that finds MPs reviewing post-Brexit food safety rules alongside local broadband, air pollution, the impact of the pandemic on literacy, and government plans for emergency care.

Parliament acts to scrutinise decisions on behalf of voters and as an early warning system for how those decisions affect us. This is why Evidence Week in Parliament 2022 will be opened by community groups and constituents with questions about how well-equipped Parliament is to use evidence on the issues they care about.

With research partners from across the country, we are then linking imminent policy questions with some of the best expertise at the cutting edge of research, to produce two days of 3-minute briefings for MPs, peers and staff on the evidence they need.

Emerging from far reaching pandemic measures into fast-changing regulations, economic conditions and debates about priorities, it could not be clearer that the public and parliament need to be in a conversation about what those decisions are based on – the evidence, the calculations, the trade offs. Evidence Week is that opportunity.

- Tracey Brown OBE, Director, Sense about Science.
It is great to see Evidence Week return to Parliament to bring together MPs, researchers, and the public. While a lot has changed over the past two years, POST's and the House of Commons Library's work of placing information and analysis at the heart of our parliamentary democracy has remained a constant.

The monumental impacts of Covid-19 were felt around the world, both personally and institutionally. While many aspects of our lives have improved since the depths of the pandemic, we need to hold onto the valuable lessons we learned and continue to apply them.

Evidence Week 2022 takes place following the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II and the ascension of HM King Charles III, once again demonstrating the ability of the UK Parliament to adapt and perform under pressure. It takes place against a backdrop of geopolitical instability in Europe, a cost-of-living crisis and the ever-present impacts from the changing climate.

Today our work is as needed as ever. The House of Commons Library’s politically impartial analysis and statistics are used every day by parliamentarians, the media and thousands of members of the public to help them navigate our changing world. At the same time POST’s piercing horizon scanning tries to make tomorrow’s cutting edge scientific and technological issues accessible today.

This year, Sense about Science have put together another exciting programme for Evidence Week 2022. The hybrid format, forged by the adversities of past years, will include both in-person events in Westminster and online sessions.

We hope to see you there.

- Dr Grant Hill-Cawthorne, House of Commons Librarian and Managing Director of Research and Information
“I am really looking forward to taking part in Westminster Evidence Week, as considering the importance and need for robust evidence in our society at this lively public debate is always a personal highlight of my year. Our recent work with ADR UK made it clear there is a public appetite for even more data being used for research and statistical evidence, and for the impact of that evidence to be made even more visible to the public.”

- Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, Office for Statistics Regulation

“Evidence should always inform policy. Gathering evidence requires capable research. 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
Evidence matters to people in all walks of life. Our elected representatives in Parliament must be able to review the evidence behind policies and ask the important questions, so better decisions are made and everyone can see what they are based on – from the allocation of allotment space in local areas, to government plans to improve education, housing, fish stocks, energy use, food safety, research and healthcare.

Evidence Week in Westminster is an opportunity to bring together the public, researchers and parliamentarians to discuss how evidence is used in policymaking. Sense about Science has partnered with the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) and London School of Economics to host Evidence Week at Westminster on 14-18 November 2022, bringing together MPs, researchers, and the public to discuss how the evidence used to make policy decisions is scrutinised.

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. Greater scrutiny and questioning will increase the quality of evidence used in policymaking, and improved transparency providing greater accountability of Government policymaking.

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.

We will also bring together parliamentary staff with national experts for a series of training events on how to understand and effectively use the huge variety of evidence they come across through their work. We have partnered with the House of Commons Library and Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST), the Office of Statistics Regulation and the UK Statistics Authority as well as IPSOS Mori and the LSE to provide training courses for parliamentary staff.
Programme

Monday 14 November
11:00 – 11:45 (online)
Parliamentary training session: How to evaluate the best evidence for decision making. | IPSOS Mori (p12)

Monday 14 November
17:00- 18:30 (online)
Opening event public panel discussion: Livestream event for constituents to ask their MP about evidence on issues important to them, with the support of an expert panel. (p7)

Tuesday 15 November
9:00-12:00 (Jubilee room)
Policy Briefings: 3-minute briefings for MPs with research experts from University of Southampton, UKRI, UK Spine, University of Leeds and British Pharmacological Society. (p9 & 10)

Tuesday 15 November
14:00 – 14:45 (online)
Parliamentary training session: The devil is in the data - what you need to know about statistics. | The UK Statistics Authority (p12)

Wednesday 16 November
9:00-12:00 (Jubilee room)
Policy Briefings: 3-minute briefings for MPs with research experts from London School of Economics, Imperial College London, Taylor and Francis, University of Exeter, University of Sheffield, Norwich Research Park and University of Leeds. (p10 & 11)

Wednesday 16 November
14:00 – 14:45 (online)
Parliamentary training session: Resource at your fingertips- using parliament's in-house research services | The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) and The House of Commons Library (p12)

Thursday 17 November
11:00-11:45 (Jubilee rooms)
Parliamentary training session: How to safely use insights from modelling and algorithms for policy decisions | Sense about Science (pg13)

Friday 18 November
11.00-12.00 (Shaw Library, LSE)
Parliamentary training session: How to identify disparities – using real data to change lives | The London School of Economics and Political Science (p13)
Monday 14 November 17:00 - 18:30 (online)
Join us online as constituents from across the UK are supported by their MP to ask about the evidence base for policies and issues that matter to them. Answering their questions will be a panel of experts including Sir Patrick Vallance, Government Chief Scientific Advisor, Sir Ian Diamond, the National Statistician, Grant Hill-Cawthorne, House of Commons Librarian, Alison Park, Interim Executive Chair of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), UKRI, Ed Humphersen, Director General for Regulation, Office for Statistics Regulation and Committee chairs from both houses.
“Sometimes it feels as though debates in the House of Lords are evidence free zones. Furthermore, all too often, when evidence is cited to support a particular argument, it is done so uncritically. I hope that Sense about Science can help Parliamentarians to be more circumspect in their use of evidence. It’s always important, in evaluating evidence, to ask questions such as “What was the sample size?” “Has the result been replicated?” “Does the evidence distinguish causation from correlation?” “How broad is the consensus among experts?” and “Did the authors have a vested interest?”. By failing to ask these sorts of question, you can probably find “evidence” to support more-or-less any thesis, including that the moon is made of blue cheese.”

-Lord Krebs

“Rigorous evidence is an essential part of policymaking.”

-Chi Onwurah, MP
Digital Youth: discerning causes of online harms
9:00 - 12:00 Tuesday 15 November, Jubilee Room

Being online has become integral to young people's lives creating risks as well as opportunities for youth mental health. Research conducted at University of Nottingham, in collaboration with the Young Person Advisory Group 'Sprouting Minds', aims to understand what causes online mental health harms and identify the biggest risks young people face. The research provides evidence on how to design and regulate a safer online digital world for younger people.

Assess movement skills in children post-lockdown
9:00 - 12:00 Tuesday 15 November, Jubilee Room

Up to 17% of children have a hidden physical disability (movement skill deficit) that impedes their progress in school (e.g., handwriting problems). The Covid-19 pandemic has worsened the situation, particularly within disadvantaged communities. Researchers at University of Bradford and University of Leeds call for schools to assess and support in treatment of physical disability.

The potential for healthy ageing research to transform the lives of older people
9:00 - 12:00 Tuesday 15 November, Jubilee Room

There is a worldwide crisis of an ageing population and a large proportion of people living in poor health later on in life. UK-SPINE will present research on new methods to improve healthy ageing and address one of the great healthcare challenges of the 21st Century.

The evidence base to end restrictive practices in hospital, care and criminal justice
9:00 - 12:00 Tuesday 15 November, Jubilee Room

Restrictive practices, such as use of physical restraints and isolation, in a range of health, education, and criminal justice settings can be used to assert control in situations where an adult or child is distressed but can be physically harmful and cause psychological trauma. Researchers from University of Leeds and University of Central Lancashire present evidence to show the impact of restrictive practices, and how to safely reduce its implementation across a wide range of institutional settings.

Personalised Prescribing: using pharmacogenomic information to improve patient outcomes
9:00 - 12:00 Tuesday 15 November, Jubilee Room

Genetic variation has an impact on how bodies react to common medicines, from effectiveness to side effects. To improve patient outcome and bring medicine to the 21st century, a new report by the British Pharmacological Society and the Royal College of Physicians brings together new evidence on how we can make personalised medicine a reality for patients.
What does the public want from policy evidence?
9:00 - 12:00 Tuesday 15 November, Jubilee Room

The pandemic created the circumstances for a unique survey of people's experience obtaining policy information from government departments. The results point to how parliament can support communities and sectors in getting what they need.

Bias in bones: Integrating sex into skeletal health and research policy to improve public health outcomes
9:00 - 12:00 Tuesday 15 November, Jubilee Room

Personalised medicine has a growing role to play in improving diagnoses of conditions and providing tailored treatments. It is therefore uniquely placed to address growing skeletal health inequalities identified through this research. We have identified that preclinical laboratory experiments favour only one sex, resulting in clinical biases where drugs studied and optimised for women are also given to men. If not addressed this bias will also negatively impact the progress and effectiveness of sex specific therapies for skeletal disease. Development of sex-specific medicines and therapy for bone health should also be supported by robust research policy to avoid exacerbating these inequalities.

Indicators for social progress in the UK
9:00 - 12:00 Wednesday 16 November, Jubilee Room

How far has the UK addressed regional social inequalities? LSE's cutting-edge research examines new indicators of the UK's progress. Engage with their new data dashboard providing a clear, simple presentation of inequalities to help make informed targeted policies.

Use of aerodynamics to increase fuel efficiency in green aviation and electric powered vehicles
9:00 - 12:00 Wednesday 16 November, Jubilee Room

Improvements in aerodynamics can lead to increased fuel efficiency and range that is vital for greener aviation and electric powered vehicles. Researchers at Imperial College London have modelled air flow for aeroplane and freight that reduces fuel consumption and greatly extends range.

Effective funding of green infrastructure in the UK
9:00 - 12:00 Wednesday 16 November, Jubilee Room

The increase in climate-induced disasters has imposed extreme costs on our urban areas. Implementing green infrastructure in urban planning is crucial to build resilience and help achieve Net Zero.
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<tr>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Six lessons for local food strategies for big cities</td>
<td>9:00 - 12:00</td>
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<td>The University of Sheffield has examined how Scotland drastically reduced refugee homelessness rates. Learn more about how a UK-wide approach can be implemented to reduce homelessness rates amongst refugees.</td>
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<td>To meet the demand of the future, food products need to be climate resilient and disease resistant while offering essential nutrients. Norwich Research Park believe gene-editing can modernise the agricultural and food industries of post-Brexit UK to offer the food of the future in a safe, nutritious and eco-friendly way.</td>
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<td>Access the UK research pool on fuel poverty</td>
<td>9:00 - 12:00</td>
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<td>Following unprecedented rises in energy costs to UK households in 2022, almost a quarter are now facing fuel poverty. A network of researchers from University of Leeds, Sheffield Hallam University, Liverpool John Moores University, University of Sussex, and the Fuel Poverty Research Network share evidence on who is most vulnerable to experiencing inadequate access to energy, and what can be done to mitigate the impacts of fuel poverty, both in the short and long-term.</td>
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<td>The UK population's perception of risk</td>
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<td>See where the UK ranks out of 142 countries in people's perception about different risks to their safety. View the Risk Know-how Framework, developed with communities and experts around the world as an aid to weighing up information about risk.</td>
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Parliamentary Training Sessions

How to evaluate the best evidence for decision-making
11:00 – 11:45 Monday 14 November, online

With a sea of research published every year, it can be overwhelming to evaluate which evidence is the most appropriate for policy support. Ipsos MORI is here to empower you to ask the right questions, scrutinise different types of information and improve the quality of evidence used in policy discussions.

The devil is in the data- what you need to know about statistics
14:00 – 14:45 Tuesday 15 November, online

We are in the middle of a data revolution. Data is used to answer every question from climate to crime. Asking the right questions of statistics can help you avoid pitfalls and ensure you feel confident to scrutinise evidence to ensure data-led decisions are transparent and accountable. The session will cover themes such as data sources, correlation and causation, errors and uncertainty, statistical models, putting statistics in context, why presentation matters and checking your sources.

Resource at your fingertips- using Parliament’s in-house research services
14:00 – 14:45 Wednesday 16 November, online

Finding relevant research and understanding the evidence can be difficult in tight deadlines. The House of Commons Library and Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) provide politically impartial research, analysis and statistics to help you stay up to date on the issues that matter to you. Learn how to access reliable, in-house research in this training session.
How to safely use insights from modelling and algorithms for policy decisions
11:00 - 11.45 Thursday 17 November, online

Many policies are developed or influenced by complicated methodologies with hidden algorithms, computer modelling and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Learn how to navigate and evaluate their role in decision-making and stay one step ahead in the rapidly developing policymaking landscape.

How to identify disparities – using real data to change lives
11.00 - 12.00 Friday 18 November The Shaw Library, LSE, Aldwych

Examples of the UK’s progress in addressing inequalities, presented by world class LSE researchers, will be used to help you identify the right evidence that underpins vital policy decisions.
“Many of the decisions we have to take in Parliament require the scrutinization of many forms of evidence. It is important that we as MPs feel confident that the evidence, we are presented with is reliable and validated. As policy makers we are often presented with conflicting information when trying to formulate policy but trusted, scientifically valid evidence should always weigh heavily in that process. Wherever possible scientific evidence in all its guises should form a key part of the process and be respected for its rigour and underlying principles from which it was derived.”

- Stephen Metcalfe MP

“Evidence forms the basis of all sound legislation. The current political picture is an extreme example of what happens when policy is based on whims rather than sound empirical data and research.”

- Carol Monaghan MP
Thank You

Sense about Science is grateful for the support of our lead partner the London School of Economics and Political Science, as well as the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST), the House of Commons Library, the Office of Statistics Regulation and UK Statistics Authority, Ipsos MORI and our research partners.
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 policy making. Sense about Science has led two transparency reviews of evidence used by government departments in 2016 and 2018.