Evidence Week in Parliament 2023
3rd – 7th July, Westminster

senseaboutscience/evidence-week
In one day in Parliament, members can find themselves voting on air pollution, scrutinising immigration statistics and questioning proposals for mass hydrogen production.

MPs have questions in their own constituency postbag too, such as on evidence for the impact of sewage discharge, whether tutoring plans are helping schools reverse Covid effects, and why the NHS is not prescribing a new medicine.

Parliament acts to scrutinise government decisions on behalf of the public, and evaluate how proposed policies will affect society, or existing ones already do.

This is why Evidence Week is opened by community groups and constituents with questions about how well-equipped Parliament is to use evidence on the issues they care about. And why, in partnership with leading research institutions across the UK, we bring cutting edge findings on the most pertinent current policy questions directly to Parliament.

Two days of 3-minute pod briefings for MPs and peers on the evidence they need are complemented with daily training sessions for parliamentary staff, ranging from how to spot deepfake to data visualisation and better ways to use evidence to evaluate policy. This year we also look forward to lively debate on how frank politicians can be with the electorate at our reception panel discussion, all initiating new conversations and relations that strengthen Parliament's use and scrutiny of evidence.

- Tracey Brown OBE, Director, Sense about Science
Access to robust, trustworthy and politically impartial evidence, information and analysis is essential to the work carried out by parliamentarians every day. The House of Commons Library, House of Lords Library, and Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology provide impartial, authoritative services to support Members of both Houses in their work scrutinising legislation and holding the Government to account through questions, debates and committee work.

It is with great pleasure that we join Sense about Science for another Evidence Week, providing a fantastic opportunity to shine a light on the vital importance of high-quality evidence in Parliament and public policy.

Last year, we saw a hybrid version of the week with events taking place both online and in the Palace of Westminster, and it is great to see this winning format continue. This year, Sense about Science have put together another packed programme of networking events, quick-fire policy briefings and training sessions, bringing together researchers, parliamentarians and the public on how evidence plays into the issues of today.

Whether in bespoke briefings, topical research, or access to information services, the value of quality evidence underpins the full range of services provided to MPs and Peers by the parliamentary libraries. We welcome the return of Evidence Week for 2023 and the opportunity to support awareness of good evidence and how to access it throughout Parliament.

- Dr Grant Hill-Cawthorne, House of Commons Librarian and Managing Director of Research and Information
& Dr Patrick M Vollmer, Director of Library Services and Librarian, House of Lords Library

Evidence Week 2023
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#EvidenceWeek
About Evidence Week

Now in its sixth year, Evidence Week in Parliament is bigger than ever. Hosted by Sense about Science and the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) in partnership with the House of Commons Library, the House of Lords Library, the UK Statistics Authority, Ipsos and research institutions across the UK, it is unique in bringing together the public, researchers and parliamentarians to discuss how the evidence used to make policy decisions is scrutinised.

Our lead partner for 2023 is the University of Nottingham, who will be briefing MPs and Peers on how their new Track the Economy tool provides valuable local real-time data. Other briefing pods include new insights on clean fuel, cyber security, food production and supply, and health.

How to get involved

In addition to accessing two days of quick-fire policy briefings in the Jubilee room, members of both houses are invited to join constituents at the livestream opening and join colleagues for lively discussions at our drinks reception on whether it is possible to be frank with the public about trade-offs in decision making.

Parliamentary staff can register for bite-size training sessions with national experts throughout the week, with workshops on a wide range of topical skills such as understanding deepfakes, ChatGPT, data visualisation, research services, data and government statistics.
“Evidence should always inform policy, both formulation and subsequent evaluation. Recent years, not least the pandemic, have shown the importance of making decisions on the best available evidence, and being willing to change our minds in response to new data.

Evidence Week brings together the public, parliamentarians, and researchers and shows how much evidence matters to people; it is a great opportunity for members of both houses to get the latest insights and findings on important policy issues from some of the UK’s top researchers.”

- Greg Clark MP, Chair of the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee & POST Board

“What a great opportunity! When else would I be able to directly ask the Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee how the Government is going to address the issue of drug pollution in our rivers? It opened my eyes to how parliament uses evidence.”

- Kelly, Constituent

“Evidence is key to all of Parliament’s functions. It is crucial in helping Members of Parliament debate the issues of the day, help their constituents, hold the Government to account, and agree effective laws. Evidence Week gives us a chance to spotlight evidence and to reflect on its role in Parliament. It also helps us to strengthen links between Parliament and evidence producers, supporting the work that POST has been doing for over 30 years.”

- Oliver Bennett MBE, Head of the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST)
“MPs rely on information and research every day to support our decision-making and it is crucial for us to have confidence and trust in the evidence we use. Through research, fellowships and other initiatives, POST strives to ensure that Parliament has access to the best available evidence. Evidence Week creates an opportunity for the public, parliamentarians, and researchers to come together to share knowledge and insights about evidence and how it is used – I hope to see you there.”

- Adam Afriyie MP, Chair of the POST Board

“It was interesting to see how much research does go on behind the scenes.”

- Gillian, Constituent

“I am really looking forward to taking part in Westminster Evidence Week. It is always one of the highlights of the year for me. At OSR we strongly advocate for the public good of statistics. Evidence Week is a tangible reminder that the public good of statistics is not just an empty phrase, but grounded in the appetite and enthusiasm for evidence among a wide range of people across the UK.”

- Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, Office for Statistics Regulation
Monday 3rd July

14:00 – 14:45
**Best practices for data visualisation**
The Government Analysis Function through the ONS (p14).

17:00 – 18:30
**Opening event**
Livestream event for constituents to ask their MP about the evidence behind policies on issues important to them, with responses from constituency MPs, chairs of select committees and national experts (p8).

Tuesday 4th July

9:00 – 12:30
**Policy briefing pods**
3-minute policy briefings for MPs and Peers from expert researchers including the University of Plymouth, Rothamsted Research, Wales Innovation Network and Lloyd's Register Maritime Decarbonisation Hub (p11).

12:30 – 16:00
**Policy briefing pods**
3-minute policy briefings for MPs and Peers from expert researchers including the London School of Economics and Political Sciences, Springer Nature, University of Plymouth, and University of Lincoln (p11-12).

14:00 – 14:45
**How to access bespoke research services for your everyday parliamentary needs**
The House of Commons Library (p14).

17:00 – 18:30
**Evidence Week Reception**
Drinks reception and lively discussion on Honest reckoning: Is it possible to be frank with the public about trade-offs in decision-making? (p10).

Wednesday 5th July

9:00 – 12:30
**Policy briefing pods**
3-minute policy briefings for MPs and Peers from expert researchers including the University of Nottingham, the University of Exeter, MyAge UKRI network and the British Geological Survey (p12-13).

12:30 – 16:00
**Policy briefing pods**
3-minute policy briefings for MPs and Peers from expert researchers including the Office of National Statistics, the University of Nottingham, Taylor & Francis, and University College London (p12-13).

14:00 – 14:45
**How to spot deepfake**
Sense about Science and University of Surrey (p14).

11:00 – 11:45
**Can ChatGPT make your job easier?**
Sense about Science and Goldsmiths University (p14).

14:00 – 14:45
**Using evidence to inform and assess policy**
Ipsos (p15).
Opening Event

Monday 3rd July  17:00- 18:30

Evidence Week is unique in being opened by constituents from all over the UK asking their MPs about how Parliament is using evidence to decide policy and review what the Government does.

Join us to hear from constituency MPs, Select Committee Chairs from both houses and national experts including Angela McLean, Government Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir Ian Diamond, the National Statistician, Grant Hill-Cawthorne, House of Commons Librarian, Patrick Vollmer, House of Lords Librarian, Ottoline Leyser, UKRI CEO, David Halpern, National Advisor on What Works, Albert Klein Tank, Director of the Met Office Hadley Centre and Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, Office for Statistics Regulation.

MPs are invited to participate via Zoom; members of the public not asking questions will watch via the public livestream.

[MPs Meeting Link]  [Public Viewing Link]
Evidence Week Reception

Tuesday 4th July  17:00- 18:30

Honest reckoning:
Is it possible to be frank with the public about trade-offs in decision making?

Every government decision requires trade-offs, which need to be effectively communicated to the public. Levelling up funds targeted at one place over another. Central Research & Development funding focused on “grand challenges”. A new rail braking system deemed too expensive or complex, despite the lives it might save.

The public sometimes becomes aware of these calculations, but they happen all the time, explicitly with Quality Adjusted Life Years (QALYs) and impact assessments, implicitly in the emphasis of policy – and mostly out of sight.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought them into the public discourse more than ever, with policy choices forced between the education of the youngest and extra life for some of the oldest, for example, or weighing the impact of job protection vs health protection. It revealed confusion about the ethical framework and calculation methods behind policy, and perhaps also squeamishness among politicians and officials about explaining how such decisions are made.

These debates spilled out into Evidence week, and we have convened an expert panel in making and analysing the cost and benefit calculations, gains and losses, values and principles that sit behind policies. We will consider what is currently preventing clarity, and how government can be frank and transparent about trade-offs. Join us for refreshments and lively discussions with our panel, including:

- **Paul Dolan**, Professor of Behavioural Science at the London School of Economics and Political Sciences and author of *Happiness by Design*.
- **Sir Robert Chote**, Chair of UK Statistics Authority and former chair of the Office of Budget Responsibility.
- **Dame Margaret Hodge MP**, Labour MP for Barking.
- **Katherine Fletcher MP**, Conservative MP for South Ribble and member of the POST Board.

The discussion will bring fresh perspectives and accommodate plenty of lively and informal conversation.

RSVP
“The UK Statistics Authority and the Office for National Statistics have been proud partners of Evidence Week in Parliament since 2018. It is a great opportunity to regularly highlight the importance of evidence-based policy making. Hearing directly from the public about their evidence requirements during the Opening Event is incredibly useful for me as the National Statistician to ensure that, as the UK’s national statistical institute, we are on track. This year in particular I am keen to hear from the public and parliamentarians as we launch our consultation on the future of population statistics.”

- Sir Ian Diamond, UK National Statistician

“It was a useful event, especially for the interesting contribution of the staff from the Library and the committee workers, which I felt provided some insight into what information, evidence or data is available for any topic of public interest”

- Eleanor, Constituent

“It was actually a really good learning opportunity and I, to be honest, I’m pretty apolitical, so I didn’t really know anything about politics, but I now have a better understanding of what the Select Committee is.”

- Meurig, Constituent

“Serious questions, serious answers, with a dose of parish council.”

- Penny Endersby, Met Office Chief Executive
Policy Briefings
Rapid briefings with our research partners - in the Jubilee room.

Intelligent farming
Tuesday 4th July 9:00 - 12:30 (Jubilee Room)
Get familiar with AI based changes in the way we grow, process, transport and even consume food.

How to create 950,000 tonnes of hydrogen
Tuesday 4th July 9:00 - 12:30 (Jubilee Room)
Key insights into decarbonising industry through large scale low cost production of hydrogen.

Shipping without carbon
Tuesday 4th July 9:00 - 12:30 (Jubilee Room)
Learn about new findings that show the safety of ammonia as a shipping fuel.

How to be cyber-secure at sea
Tuesday 4th July 9:00 - 16:00 (Jubilee Room)
The mechanisms to protect critical national infrastructure against growing maritime cyber threats.

Plastic and microplastic pollution – evidence comparing the solutions
Tuesday 4th July 9:00 - 16:00 (Jubilee Room)
Textile fibres, tyre particles, biodegradable plastics, wastewater treatment, mechanical clean up – find out what works and what doesn’t.

Book Appointment Online

Evidence Week 2023
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Policy Briefings

**Is growth always dirty?**
*Tuesday 4th July 12:30 - 16:00 (Jubilee Room)*
Strengths and opportunities for net zero growth.

**A practical guide to creating energy policy**
*Tuesday 4th July 12:30 - 16:00 (Jubilee Room)*
The way to use evidence from different sectors to optimise energy policy outcomes.

**Food supply**
*Tuesday 4th July 12:30 - 16:00 (Jubilee Room)*
See the difference made by data exchange and AI.

**Real time economic data on your locality**
*Wednesday 5th July 9:00 - 16:00 (Jubilee Room)*
Use University of Nottingham's Track the economy tool to get unique data on your local area- including how it is doing since the pandemic and how it compares to its neighbours and the country.

**Digital health services, made more equal**
*Wednesday 5th July 9:00 - 12:30 (Jubilee Room)*
Evidence on the effect of digital uptake.
Policy Briefings

**Muscle resilience**
*Wednesday 5th July 9:00 - 12:30 (Jubilee Room)*

See new findings which reveal that building muscle through the life course cuts the burden on health and social care from an ageing population.

[Book Appointment Online](#)

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**What a carbon sequestration research facility could discover**
*Wednesday 5th July 9:00 - 12:30 (Jubilee Room)*

See the UK’s potential in carbon capture, usage and storage.

[Book Appointment Online](#)

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**The future of population statistics in England and Wales**
*Wednesday 5th July 12:30 - 16:00 (Jubilee Room)*

More timely and responsive data that will enable us to improve our knowledge of the population and reflect our rapidly changing society.

[Book Appointment Online](#)

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**Research can do so much more for you**
*Wednesday 5th July 12:30 - 16:00 (Jubilee Room)*

More accessible research to benefit policy making.

[Book Appointment Online](#)

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**Digital twins for healthcare**
*Wednesday 5th July 12:30 - 16:00 (Jubilee Room)*

Understand how virtual twins enables fast diagnosis and effective treatment.

[Book Appointment Online](#)
Parliamentary Training Sessions
Bitesize training sessions for parliamentary staff from leading experts across the UK.

Best practices for data visualisation
Monday 3rd July 14:00 – 14:45 (Online)
Top tips on how to improve the presentation, dissemination and accessibility of data.

Register Online

How to spot deepfake
Tuesday 4th July 14:00 – 14:45 (Online)
Stay one step ahead of generative artificial intelligence in the age of digital disinformation.

Register Online

How to access bespoke research services for your everyday parliamentary needs
Wednesday 5th July 14:00 – 14:45 (Online)
The House of Commons Library can do so much for you to support constituents, develop policy and scrutinise legislation.

Register Online

Intelligent transparency
Thursday 6th July 14:00 – 14:45 (Online)
How to build public trust in government statistics and data.

Register Online

Can ChatGPT make your job easier?
Friday 7th July 11:00 – 11:45 (Online)
Find out the risks, challenges and benefits of using ChatGPT in your everyday tasks. What can it do for you, and what you should never use it for?

Register Online
Parliamentary Training Sessions

Using evidence to inform and assess policy
Friday 7th July 14:00 – 14:45 (Online)

Practical guide on different types of evidence and how they are useful in policymaking.

Register Online
"Asking penetrating questions and being open to changing our minds in the light of new evidence can only enhance our integrity as Members. MPs do not need a scientific background to scrutinise evidence, but we should take a scientific approach and be ready to ask the right questions – helping to identify what works, what does not, and where vital information is missing."

-Stephen Metcalfe MP, Science and Technology Select Committee & POST Board

“I learnt about the recent enquiry into how to ensure the STEM workforce can deliver the UK as a Science and Technology superpower.”

-Caroline, Constituent

“Evidence forms the basis of all sound legislation.”

- Carol Monaghan MP, Science and Technology Select Committee & POST Board

“I didn’t even know the House of Commons had a librarian.”

-Howard, Constituent
Thank You

Sense about Science and the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) are grateful for the support of our lead partner, the University of Nottingham, the House of Commons Library, House of Lords Library, the Office of Statistics Regulation and UK Statistics Authority, Ipsos and all 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.