EVIDENCE WEEK

JUNE 2019
“The role and importance of evidence is critical in terms of holding Parliament and parliamentarians to account in how we consider and respond to evidence. Statistics tell you how things are working and without understanding what is working, we have no hope of making the world work better for everyone.”

Chi Onwurah MP, Shadow Minister for Industrial Strategy, Science and Innovation
Parliament is where the issues that affect us are raised, debated and reasoned through. MPs move from discussing the impact of housing policies in their constituencies to debating extended cancer screening programmes; from interrogating the assumptions behind the user-demand models for HS2 to questioning the Treasury on which regions will benefit from a new innovation fund.

It’s a tall analytical order for people whose primary job is to represent their constituencies and parties, but asking whether politicians have science backgrounds is misguided. What we should ask instead is, what are the insights and resources from research that would help politicians to scrutinise evidence, and are they using them?

Evidence Week 2019 is an unprecedented chance for MPs and their constituents to get a unique 3-minute briefing on over 20 kinds of evidence that are central to policy issues across the UK. We invite everyone to take it.

Tracey Brown OBE, Director of Sense about Science

As Members of Parliament we represent the public, and so must recognise the priorities of our constituents, and subsequently how to properly scrutinise the underlying evidence to make judgments that will best serve the public.

In Sense about Science’s recent release of Ipsos MORI’s results of a survey of over 100 MPs – which asked which issues garnered the most letters in their postbags – it comes as no surprise that concerns over the health service, EU membership, housing and benefits topped the list.

Though the issues weighing most on people’s minds are not traditionally thought of as evidence-based, robust evidence and analysis are critical for effective action and for scrutinising its likely effects.

Politicians are increasingly understanding the critical role that their use of objective evidence has in solving the complex problems facing our nation. As we go into Evidence Week 2019, I hope that the public and researchers see their critical role in working with us to do that.

Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP, Chair of the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee
A thriving parliamentary democracy needs impartial, high quality information and a strong public voice. The House of Commons Library and POST (the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology) are taking part in Evidence Week to show people all over the UK that evidence matters, and to explore how Parliament uses evidence to inform decision making.

The Library is currently working with computer scientists from the University of Manchester to model the topical content of the enquiries we receive from MPs. This will help us understand more about which topics MPs and their constituents are most concerned about and help us to find the best possible evidence to support their work more quickly. POST is launching a new horizon scanning report during Evidence Week. The report looks at the topics likely to interest parliamentarians in the coming years, giving us a clearer picture of the way emerging science and technology changes may affect and shape policy. Areas of change identified include emerging computing technologies, the future of crime and justice, equalising access to public services, and sparing nature while increasing productivity.

Penny Young,
House of Commons Librarian and Director of Research and Information
ABOUT EVIDENCE WEEK

Evidence Week in Parliament is an initiative of Sense about Science – the independent charity that promotes the public interest in sound science and evidence – in collaboration with the House of Commons Library, POST (the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology) and the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee.

Last year’s inaugural Evidence Week came about in recognition of the new challenges that face Parliament: to scrutinise an increasing range of issues amid an explosion of research and data. It sought to provide easily-assimilated research insights for the issues being raised in constituencies and by national policymaking.

Building on its success with 3-minute briefings for MPs and constituents in Upper Waiting Hall, Evidence Week 2019 will open with findings from the Ipsos MORI survey of the issues MPs deal with, followed by a 2-day programme of ‘Evidence Pods’ with UK research organisations.

The 3-minute briefings are for any – ANY! – MPs, constituents meeting their MP, peers and all parliamentary staff. The pods can show you snapshots, delve into questions, give you the 30 second version and an email... So come to one, come to many.

OPENING EVENT:
EVIDENCE-RELATED ISSUES
FACING MPS

Monday 24 June, 4–6pm
Strangers’ Dining Room, House of Commons

Hosted by Norman Lamb MP
Community organisations will present 90 seconds on each of the top evidence issues MPs are handling, together with the results of an Ipsos MORI survey of MPs about postbag issues and national concerns.

Refreshments
RSVP Amelia@senseaboutscience.org
Supported by SAGE Publishing and LSE
JUST 3 MINUTES...
Rapid one-to-one briefings at Evidence Pods in the Upper Waiting Hall

TUESDAY 25 JUNE, 9AM-1PM

POD 1 VISUALISING COMMUNITY INEQUALITIES
You can now visualise the complex relationships between communities, the built environment and inequality in our cities. By analysing and representing not only our roads, paths and buildings, but also human activity, social infrastructures and power relationships, this novel technology shows up existing inequality. It also shows the likely effect of policy decisions that help or hinder spatial and social connections.

POD 2 HOW DO REGIONS THRIVE?
Building up local and regional economies, and tackling inequalities at the local level, are pressing concerns. LSE research combines social survey, electoral and economic data sets to build detailed regional profiles and identify specific opportunities to stimulate growth. Data inferences provide a regional lens on how social inequalities are changing and where progress can be made in addressing them.

POD 3 USE THE RESEARCH BASE ON ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are highly stressful events or situations that directly harm children or adolescents or negatively affect the environment in which they live; from abuse to growing up in a household with separated parents. The Commons SciTech Committee was concerned about the lack of government strategy or effective oversight mechanisms to monitor what evidence local authority approaches are based on. Our pod will provide a 3-minute introduction to the kind of evidence that can be used to develop effective interventions and evaluate them.

POD 4 RESEARCH EVIDENCE TO IMPROVE YOUNG PEOPLE’S MENTAL HEALTH
Many mental health problems start in childhood or adolescence, but very few of these young people have access to evidence-based treatments. Our pod will highlight how NIHR research has led to the development of efficient and effective interventions so that children and young people can get help when they first need it.

CONSTITUENCY DATA DASHBOARDS
Join us to hear about how we’re using data to create dashboards that give a detailed picture of housing supply, education, crime and more in every constituency.
JUST 3 MINUTES...
Rapid one-to-one briefings at Evidence Pods in the Upper Waiting Hall

TUESDAY 25 JUNE, 1PM–5PM

POD 1 2021 CENSUS
Once every ten years the census provides an opportunity to build a detailed and comprehensive picture of the nation. Our 3-minute briefing will showcase how we will engage with all communities to ensure high response rates to the 2021 Census, and how census data will aid parliamentarians to the benefit of their local communities. ONS will also share details of preparations for the first primarily online census, including the upcoming census rehearsal in October 2019.

POD 2 INDUSTRY 4.0: RESEARCH TRACKING THE IMPACT OF AUTOMATION
Also known as the fourth industrial revolution, Industry 4.0 is the increasing use of automation and digital connectivity – including cloud computing, artificial intelligence and the internet of things. Our pod showcases research evidence on how these are shaping sectors and markets, and their future trajectory.

POD 3 PUPIL PREMIUM FOR DISADVANTAGED PUPILS: HOW TO WORK OUT ITS EFFECT
While new international evidence shows that the attainment gap at school is increasing worldwide, what reliable evidence can politicians use to judge the effect of Pupil Premium funding in England? It is difficult, and some commentators are querying its usefulness. Our 3-minute briefing is on using definitions and measures of disadvantage that are comparable before and after 2011, and which can demonstrate the impact of Pupil Premium on the attainment gap and on the extent to which poorer pupils are clustered in specific schools.

POD 4 THE PATH TO ENDING HOMELESSNESS SHOWN IN RESEARCH EVIDENCE
Everyone wants to end homelessness for good. Come for a 3-minute evidence briefing about how best to achieve this. Take a tour through the interactive tools to find out what we do know about what works and why, and where the gaps are. They show how this evidence can develop to support steps towards a society in which any experience of homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurrent.

HORIZON SCANNING
Join us to find out how we bridge research and policy by identifying emerging topics of interest for Parliament, producing impartial and peer-reviewed POSTnotes, and providing a host of exciting services for Committees and parliamentarians.
POD 1 UNDERSTAND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ROAD USERS
When driving, we make life-or-death decisions in an instant. Research into how the human brain takes in, stores and responds to information is essential to successful road safety policy. Our interactive display will show you how policy can take account of these processes to reduce deaths on our roads – and give you insight into your own driving habits too.

POD 2 THE VIRTUAL HUMAN: A CASE STUDY IN COLLABORATIVE DATA
Bridging human biology, chemistry, physics and computer science, the Virtual Human uses digital evidence – from the letters in your genetic code to medical imaging of your heart – to seek real improvements to your healthcare. It exemplifies the power of using data on multiple scales, from multiple sources in collaborative projects between research teams in the UK and internationally.

POD 3 RESEARCH AND REGULATION TO STOP FOOD POISONING
This evidence pod will share insights on how the UK uses evidence to inform food safety decisions and what can go wrong. It will show you the impact regulators have on industry standards and how a reduction in Campylobacter contamination in chicken could lead to 150,000 fewer cases of illness and a saving of £110m each year.

POD 4 ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE: HOW WE ARE TACKLING THE LOSS OF WORLDWIDE MEDICINE
The research and policy challenges of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) are daunting. The UKRI AMR evidence pod will provide a simple entry into this crucial and complicated issue, with insight into cutting-edge AMR innovation and how scientific research is supporting public policy.

EVIDENCE IS A PUBLIC INTEREST ISSUE
From children’s mental health to the quality of the air we breathe, evidence matters to constituents from different walks of life across the UK. Get an embargoed copy of our guide to data science and hear how you can support the Ask for Evidence community campaign to hold the powerful – including politicians – to account.
JUST 3 MINUTES...
Rapid one-to-one briefings at Evidence Pods in the Upper Waiting Hall

WEDNESDAY 26 JUNE, 1PM–5PM

POD 1 DRONES: THE NOISE CHALLENGE
Is society ready for pervasive use of drones... and their noise? Drones could be flying in urban locations within a few years. This evidence pod will give you a 3-minute briefing combining current knowledge about drone noise, public reaction, design challenges and operational realities. It will chart the research route towards effective control, economic benefit and the looming political problem if the ground rules are not speedily set.

POD 2 ELECTRIC VEHICLES: SEE WHY AI IS NECESSARY
While promising to cut pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, the uptake of electric vehicles will create an unprecedented load on the UK electricity infrastructure. At our evidence pod, you will learn what artificial intelligence can do – to manage vehicle charging in a smart way within existing infrastructure and to turn electric vehicles into smart batteries (vehicle-to-grid). Within 3 minutes you’ll see the policy challenges that need to be overcome to realise a smart grid.

POD 3 BRITAIN BREATHING
Get familiar with a new state of the art approach using ‘citizen sensors’ to gather real-time local data on asthma and allergies and how environmental factors such as pollutants may or may not be playing a part. With these new data you will be able to compare your constituency with others.

POD 4 CLIMATE CHANGE TARGETS FOR YOUR LOCAL AREA
Do you know about science-based, Paris Agreement aligned climate change targets for your local area? Researchers at Tyndall Manchester have developed an interactive tool to help local areas set their own climate change targets based on the latest research.

WHAT MPS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT
View the results from Ipsos MORI’s biannual survey of MPs on the most pressing issues facing their constituency and the nation, as well as a topic analysis of MPs’ postbags.

Contact Anin – anin@senseaboutscience.org to find a time to visit evidence pods.
THANK YOU

Sense about Science is grateful for the support of our principal partners SAGE, LSE and Wiley, our Evidence Pod partners (pages 6–9), the British Pharmacological Society and Imperial College London.
“Considering the evidence is a powerful way to help communities to make joint decisions and find ways of working together to address problems.”

Dr Narayan Shrestha, Aberdeen Multicultural Centre

“... Evidence matters. It matters now because, as ever, data and evidence provide an account of our communities. To make evidence matter in government, we need politicians to understand evidence and advocate for greater transparency on behalf of our communities.”

Megan Lucero, Director of The Bureau Local