Influencing UK Policy

There are various routes into policy making, from directly affecting current laws to networking opportunities so that your name is known in policy making circles.

Is a relevant Bill currently going through parliament?

- All bills are scrutinised at committee stage, after second reading, which give opportunity to submit evidence.
- Current bills going through Parliament are listed online, with current progress and update services. Current Public Bill Committee debates are listed here, all current calls being listed here.

Contribute to a committee

- Committee's scrutinise Parliament, covering a wide range of topics. They issue open calls for evidence that anyone can submit to.
- All committees are listed online, visit our section below for more information on engaging with them, inside and outside of open calls.

Contact an All Party Parliamentary Group

- These informal interest groups (APPGs) have no ability to influence policy themselves but can provide a useful networking tool.
- All APPGs are listed by subject here. Their webpages will give an idea of the frequency of meetings, an official contact and a full list of members, whose interest and contact details are searchable here.

Contact the Commons Library

- This research service produces regular briefings based on academic research, with specialists for different areas.
- Specialists aren't listed online but you can contact hcenquiries@parliament.uk to be directed to an appropriate contact.

Hold or attend an Event

- Attending relevant events, particularly in central London, will enable you to utilise networking opportunities with policy makers and established policy research centres such as Mile End Institute and UCL Public Policy.
- If you want to run your own policy event then check our guidance here.

Contact an MP directly

- You can contact members with relevant interests who may be interested in your work by email, letter or a phone call.
- Where possible do this in emails and letters as a first measure, attaching policy briefs explaining your case, then following up with a phone call. Guide to Policy Briefs.
- Identify contacts through relevant Committee and APPG panels, or identifying speakers on relevant topics through MyParliament.

Committees

Committees scrutinise the work of Parliament, issuing open calls for evidence to produce reports on their findings. There are two types of committee:

Select Committee

There is a Commons Select Committee to reflect each government department, examining spending, policies and administration in that area.

Public Bill Committee

These are customarily set up after the second reading of a public bill to further scrutinise the document, named after the relevant bill.

You can view a full list of active committees here, with links to webpages for email updates, panel membership and committee activity.

How can I contribute?

Committees invite contributions through open calls for evidence. Search all current calls here or subscribe for updates through email or Twitter for notification of future calls.

When committees put out an open call for evidence it will go though the following process:

Terms of reference created → Call for Evidence → Evidence Scruitinised → Call for witnesses → Report created

Our guide to the open call process explains how to submit evidence in more detail.

What if there isn't a relevant open call?

- **Select Committee** topics are chosen by their panel based on their own interests, external pressure (e.g media scrutiny) or scoping exercises and public consultation.
- If your topic isn't currently covered by a relevant committee you can contact administrators to find out more about potential upcoming topics. You can also directly contact panel members with relevant interests (contained on their personal webpages) to try and influence future subjects and direction through the panel's preferences.
- Parliamentary Outreach suggest that phone calls are the best means for making initial contact. Emails can then be used to follow up to support conversations or if unable to get through.
- **Public Bill Committees** convene at the committee stage, after second reading stage. View all current bills before Parliament here, and click through to see what stage they are currently at.

Influencing Policy through Events

Many senior civil servants visit events featuring academic speakers on relevant subjects (44% access research in this way according to Talbot and Talbot, 2014), so it is worth attending these, making the most of networking sessions, as well as setting them up yourself.

Holding Events

When setting up an event targeting policy makers a few key questions to ask are:

Will policy makers be available?

- Check parliamentary calendars, MPs leave to their constituencies when parliament is in recess so are less are likely to be in London but may have more time to attend events and may be preparing questions and speeches for the next parliamentary session.
- Keep the time commitment short, at preferably evening or lunchtime. If there is budget, hiring a venue in or close to Westminster during Parliament and providing food can act as a pull.

How can you appeal to policy makers?

- Featuring a broad range of speakers across your university or the wider topic enables policy makers to engage with a range of experts at once, and allows you to tap into other speakers' contacts.
- Send personal invites, identifying relevant people by contacting members of relevant Committee and APPG panels, or identifying speakers on relevant topics in Parliamentary records or by searching your interest in MyParliament.

  To increase take up you can ask colleagues with existing connections to act as a channel, or ask a member of senior management to send an official invite.
- Ensure your title and synopses provides a clear link to policy implications. E.g. Rather than 'Results and Implications of Local Housing Survey' use 'Policy Solutions to London's Housing Problem'.

How should you design the event?

- Think about what the aims you wish to achieve directly from the event and how they can be achieved. Research briefings could take the form of a talk or roundtable, however workshops can facilitate more direct input from policy makers. Read our event guide for more advice.
- Networking opportunities will allow you to engage with policy makers on a one-to-one basis and follow up on any questions, ensure there's time set aside for this.

Useful Links

Parliamentary search options
http://myparliament.info/
http://search-material.parliament.uk/

Named by subject you can find a full list of Select Committees here. Public Bill Committees specifically scrutinise new Bills and are named after them.

Info on Public Bill Committees

http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06507/SN06507.pdf