NIHR Webinar: Engaging with Parliament

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NIHR: Engaging with the UK Parliament

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Outline of presentation

• Parliament vs Government
• An overview of places where academic research is used in Parliament
• How to feed your research into Parliament
Parliament vs Government I

• Parliament: House of Commons (MPs), House of Lords (Peers) and the Monarch

• Government: the party, or parties, that can command the confidence of the House of Commons

• Parliament’s work
  – Scrutinise the UK Government
  – Make new laws and change existing ones
  – Raise and debate key issues
Parliament vs Government II

- Parliament
  (Westminster)

- Government
  (Whitehall)
Parliament vs Government III

• Government

• Parliament
Parliament’s work

- Scrutinise the UK Government
- Make new laws and change existing ones
- Raise and debate key issues
Where is academic research used in Parliament?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>House of Commons</th>
<th>House of Lords</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select Committees</td>
<td>Select Committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>House of Commons Library</td>
<td>House of Lords Library</td>
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<td>MPs’ researchers</td>
<td>Peers’ researchers</td>
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All Party Parliamentary Groups

Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST)
Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST)

Bicameral institution of Parliament that supports and advances the use of research evidence in Parliament. Core activities include:

- **Briefings.** 4-page briefings (POSTnotes).
- **Supports select committees & libraries.** Providing contacts, bespoke briefings
- **Connects researchers and Parliament.** Events, fellowship schemes (PhD students and academic fellowship scheme)
- **Capacity building.** Providing training about using research and research methods.
POST’s sections

- Biological sciences and health
- Physical sciences and ICT
- Energy and environment
- Social sciences
POST’s recent work in biological sciences and health

- Supply of Medical Radioisotopes
- Global Health Inequalities
- Dietary Advice, Pregnancy and Breastfeeding
- UK Trends in Infectious Diseases
- Genome Editing
- Creating Age-Friendly Cities
- Green Space and Health
Engaging with POST: contribute to a POSTnote

• Contribute to a current note
  – Current work: [Current work](#)
  – Planned work: [Planned work](#)
  • Sign up to our mailing list: [Sign up to our mailing list](#)
  • Twitter: @POST_UK
• Propose a POSTnote
Select Committees: what are they?

- Cross-party groups of MPs and Peers that scrutinise different areas of government
- One Commons committee for each Government department (usually backbench MPs)
- Six main Lords committees (European Union, science and technology, economic affairs, communications, international relations, UK constitution)
- Plus cross-departmental committees and joint committees
Select Committees: what do they do?

- Systematic scrutiny of Government through inquiries
- Supported by committee specialists they...
  - Announce their intention to conduct an inquiry
  - Invite the public and Government to submit written evidence
  - Then invite certain groups or individuals to give oral evidence
  - Write a report which generally makes recommendations for the Government...
    - The Government must then respond
Select Committees: some recent inquiries

Health Committee:

• Childhood obesity
• Suicide prevention
• Public health post-2013
• Winter pressure in accident and emergency departments
• Impact of the Spending Review on health and social care
Select Committees: getting involved

- Committees issue a “call for evidence” advertised online and via press notices. Keep an eye on: www.parliament.uk/business/committees/

- Committees also send out updates on Twitter. Follow:
  - @CommonsHealth | @CommonsSTC | @LordsSTCom

- Respond by submitting written evidence - this may lead to an invite to give oral evidence

- Committees sometimes appoint a specialist adviser when expertise is needed to inform oral evidence sessions or shape a report. Advisers are usually academics/expert practitioners
Libraries: what are they and what do they do?

- Both the House of Commons and House of Lords have Libraries
- Libraries do several different things for members:
  - Produce briefing papers
  - Produce debate packs
  - Offer a confidential, tailored and impartial enquiry service for members
- The House of Commons Library has different sections staffed by specialists. E.g. Science and Environment Section
- The House of Lords Library is staffed by generalists
Libraries: getting involved

• Familiarise yourself with the kinds of briefings the Libraries produce and the topics they cover
  – See: http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/

• Let the Libraries know that you and your research exist
  – Email: papers@parliament.uk
All-Party Parliamentary Groups: what are they?

• APPGs are cross-party groups of MPs and Peers who share a common interest and wish to exchange information or inform debate

• For example: Alcohol Harm; Allergy; Antibiotics; Blood Cancer; Blood Donation; Body Image; Brain Tumours; Breast Cancer; Cancer;

• Also: Choir; Cricket; Football; Jazz Appreciation...
APPGs: getting involved

• APPG Register
  – www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmallparty/register/contents.htm

• Groups vary in level of activity, but typically meet four times a year

• They invite experts to give talks, hold mini investigations and publish reports

• APPGs usually have websites and some have Twitter accounts. Have a look and write to them if you have something to contribute
Making contact with Parliament

• Know what Parliament is interested in. See:
  – ‘what’s on’ / Hansard / Written Questions and Answers
  – POST and Library briefings
  – Committee inquiries

• Contact POST advisers, the Libraries and relevant APPGs

• Submit evidence to a Committee

• Also: increase your visibility
Contact

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Questions and Discussion