



What and how do parliaments know? Examining relationships between democracy and knowledge use

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Knowledge Mobilisation Forum, Dundee, 8 May 2024

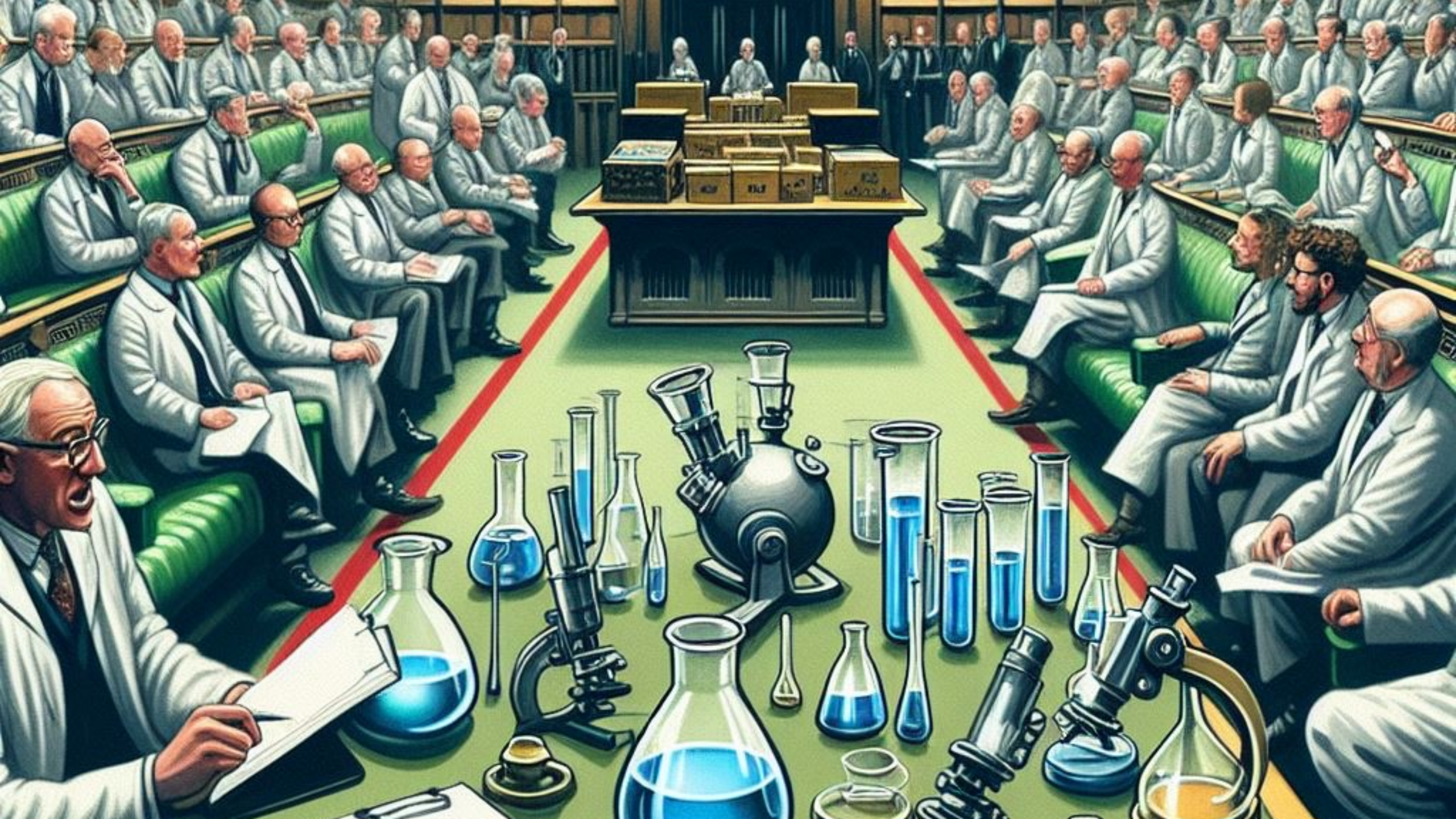


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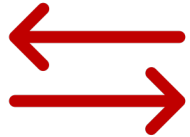
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Democracy, knowledge and decision-making



Renewed questions over mis- and dis-information in democratic societies, rise of so-called ‘post-truth’ politics, etc.



Public satisfaction in political institutions in decline, with some warning political systems at risk



Policy challenges increasing in scale and urgency: Covid-19, climate crisis and social and economic inequalities



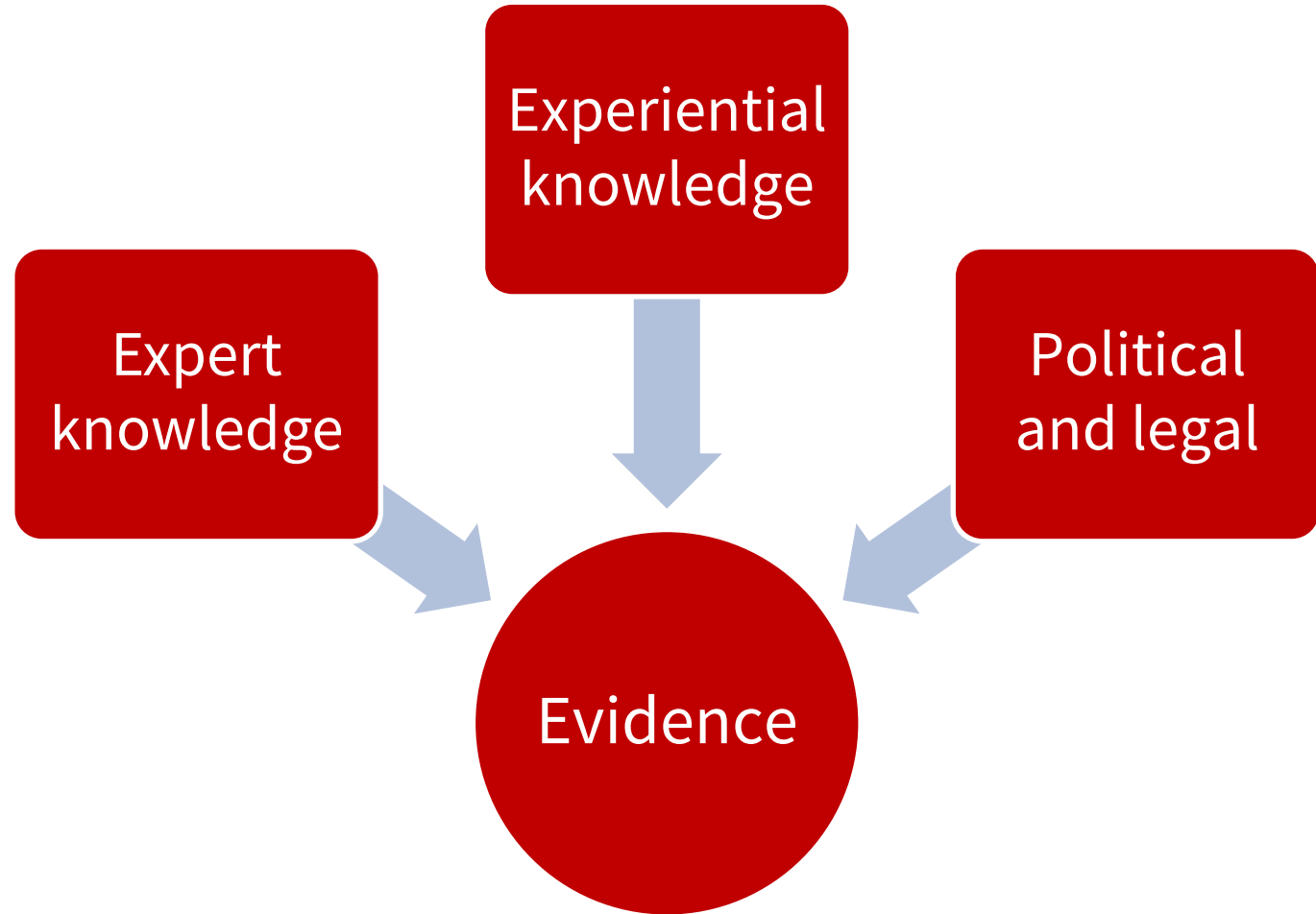
What I want to do this morning

- 1** Summarise patterns of studying knowledge use in democracies
- 2** Develop a case study of knowledge use in the UK's national parliament
- 3** Identify mechanisms of engagement with parliaments



1. Situating parliaments in debates about knowledge mobilisation

Defining 'knowledge' and 'evidence'





Research on debates about knowledge and politics

- Philosophy literatures
 - Different ways of knowing
 - Defining and understanding realities, etc.
- Science and Technology Studies (STS)
 - Discipline emerged especially in the 1970s and 80s
 - Demonstrates the social construction of ‘science’ in society
- Policy studies literature
 - Different types of research use
 - Barriers and facilitators for research use, etc.





What about parliaments?

- Research less well-developed and perhaps somewhat fragmented, even though:
 - The importance of ‘information’ has been long acknowledged
 - And parliaments offer various research-related services
- Existing research focused on:
 - Science and technology assessment (Karaulova and Edler 2023)
 - Institutional access by interest groups (Binderkrantz et al. 2015)
 - Smaller scale and single case studies (Crewe 2017; Turnpenny et al. 2012)
- More has begun to emerge in recent years



What about parliaments?

When you think of ‘parliament’, what springs to mind?

Have you engaged with parliaments to support evidence-based policy?

If yes, how? If not, why not?



Why parliaments are often overlooked

- Do not play a significant role in policy-making compared to governments
 - ‘Rubber-stamps’, ‘marginal actors’, etc.
- Parliaments are places for political disagreement rather than policy-making
 - Driven by different logics and demands
 - Too public
- Institution is too complicated to navigate and understand
- Do not have well-developed scientific/expert knowledge advisory mechanisms



Why it's time to pay more attention

- Parliaments are foundational to democratic politics
 - Representation of the people and interests
 - Accountability of government
 - Scrutinise and pass legislation
- Parliaments are influential in decision-making
 - Significant policy actor overall (e.g. Russell and Cowley 2016)
 - Significant impact on legislation (e.g. Russell and Gover 2017)
- Expert, experiential and political knowledge are vital to parliamentary work
 - Many have developed mechanisms for supporting MPs
 - We need to dig deeper beyond 'interest group access' and the 'informational theory'

A map showing mechanisms used by
parliaments around the world to access and
harness academic research

2,473 views

Published on 9 December 2022

SHARE

Map of mechanisms

All items

Developed by Vicky
Ward and Mark
Monaghan

<https://ipen-network.org/global-mapping/>

Made with Google My Maps



Map data ©2023 Terms 1,000 km

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Dutch MPs trial new 'gold standard' for scientific scrutiny

Parliaments routinely seek scientific advice, but a Dutch pilot goes one step further, asking academics to directly critique what the government is proposing

September 29, 2020

David Matthews

Twitter: @DavidMJourn

Academics have been brought in to directly scrutinise Dutch legislation, chiding the government for vague policy goals and aiming to offer lawmakers evidence-based alternative policies.

While lawmakers the world over routinely get advice from academics, the Dutch pilot scheme, which aims to become a "gold standard" for scientific scrutiny, goes a step further and asks researchers to directly analyse new legislation.

"What is very new here is that with this ap policymaking process," said Pieter Duisent

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NEWS | 18 December 2018

Spain to establish parliamentary office of science

Nation's parliament has budgeted for a new office next year, following push from grassroots scientists' movement.

Michele Catanzaro

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The Role of Research in the UK Parliament

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Director of Public Policy, UCL STEaPP, Co-Investigator and former Director of POST

Dr Jason Blackstock
Head of Department, UCL STEaPP and Principal Investigator

Volume one

Parlament Österreich
Parlamentsdirektion

First „Austrian Day of Parliamentary Research“

Announcement and call for contributions

February 2023

Dept. 3.2 – Research and Support in Parliamentary Matters

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What are parliaments and how do they work?

- Their forms, shapes and sizes are always distinctive – no two are the same
 - Some are bicameral, e.g. UK Parliament, or unicameral, e.g. Scottish Parliament
 - Each one tries to tell a story of its people in one way or another
 - Executives and governments drawn from parliaments
- Parliaments often fulfil three broad and overlapping functions
 1. Representation: through elections and representative work
 2. Law-making: through an agreed process with different stages
 3. Accountability: through oral/written questions, debates, committees, etc.
- **Parliaments are often defined and perceived as political institutions**



Gathering and
consuming knowledge

Synthesising and
producing knowledge

Evaluating and using
knowledge

Parliaments
as
**knowledge
institutions**



2. Insights about knowledge mobilisation in the UK Parliament

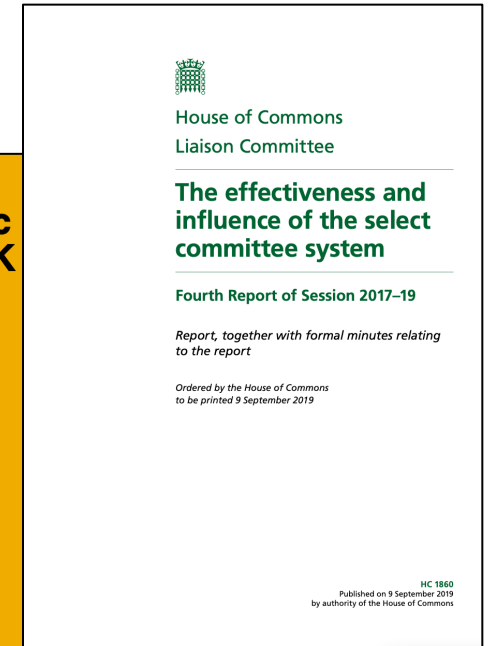


Structure of the UK Parliament

- Bicameral system made up of the House of Commons and House of Lords
- Fulfils main three functions:
 - Representation through first-past-the-post and public engagement initiatives
 - Law-making through an extended process including bill committees
 - Accountability through PQs (written/oral), debates and select committees
- Traditionally perceived as an adversarial political institution
 - Emphasis on debating and oratory
 - Explanatory accountability an important dimension

The UK Parliament and knowledge use

- Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology
- House of Commons Library
- House of Lords Library
- MPs, peers and their offices
- All-Party Parliamentary Groups
- Political parties
- Bill committees
- Select committees



How is research used in Parliament?

- Kenny et al. (2017) found that research is important but interpreted flexibly
 - To support scrutiny
 - As background knowledge
 - To shape opinions
 - To substantiate pre-existing views
 - To provide balance
 - To provide credibility
 - To score political points
- Echoes previous research on functions of knowledge





My research on the UK Parliament and knowledge use

- Questions:
 - What counts as ‘evidence’ in parliamentary work?
 - What does the evidence base in parliaments even look like?
 - To what extent do different units in parliaments value knowledge differently?
 - How do everyday practices shape knowledge use in parliaments?
 - What does ‘good’ use of knowledge in parliaments look like?
- Data: focus group (2016); fellowship (2021-22); interviews (ongoing); database (ongoing)



Knowledge use in different parts of Parliament (Geddes et al. 2018) (1)

- General perceptions of a gap between academic research and Parliament:
 - “the academic is determined to present what it is that they have studied, and the MP is just sitting there, thinking, ‘it’s wonderful that you’ve done something, but I don’t see the relevance’” (HC committee clerk 2)
 - “the data we use is really ... the stuff that’s matured sufficiently to become consensual” (HC librarian 2)
- Issues regarding relevance, timeliness, accessibility



Knowledge use in different parts of Parliament (Geddes et al. 2018) (2)

POST	Libraries	Committees
Provide accessible overviews of research	Information and research services for MPs and peers	Scrutinise government on the basis of evidence process
POSTnotes	Library briefings, debate packs, etc.	Committee reports
MPs, peers and the public	MPs, peers and the public	MPs, peers, government, media, public
“You are more interested in some of the hard-edged, science things”	“The way you write it, you’re not taking sides”	“When we say evidence, what we mean is testimony”



Select committees in the House of Commons

- Structure and organisation:
 - Cross-party group of between 9-18 MPs per committee (supported by 6-8 staff)
 - Chairs directly elected by the whole House by secret ballot
- Tasks and powers:
 - To ‘examine the expenditure, administration and policy’ of government
 - May ‘send for persons, papers and records’ (PPR powers)
- Hold inquiries with terms of reference, gathering evidence and publishing reports
- Recommendations are advisory – no government is forced to accept changes
 - In practice government accept around 40% (Russell and Benton, 2013)

Committees

[UK Parliament](#) > [Business](#) > [Committees](#) > [Environmental Audit Committee](#) > [Technological Innovations and Climate Change: Negative Emissions Technologies](#) > Ca...

Call for Evidence

Technological Innovations and Climate Change: Negative Emissions Technologies

In this strand of its inquiry, the Committee will look at the potential contribution of negative emissions technologies (NETs) to achieving the Government's net zero ambitions and in mitigating the effects of carbon emissions more generally.

Negative emissions technologies are attempts to absorb and store carbon and other atmospheric greenhouse gases (GHGs). Alongside nature-based solutions,^[1] NETs are one of the proposed tools within greenhouse gas removal (GGR) techniques to reach the overall net zero target.

The UK Government is a signatory to the Paris Agreement (2015) which aims to limit average global warming to well below 2°C, ideally to below 1.5°C. In order to do this, the UK Government has committed to reducing carbon emissions (a key cause for global warming) to 'net zero' by 2050.^[2] This means that any carbon emissions, predominantly from CO₂, must be as low as possible and ideally at absolute zero.

For some sectors, reaching net zero is very difficult. This includes several 'energy-intensive industries' (EIIs), such as agriculture, aviation, iron and steel production, cement production and other industries.^[4] These are sometimes known as 'hard-to-decarbonise' sectors. In these cases, the development of GGR techniques could off-set carbon emissions to reach zero emissions. According to most climate models, large-scale deployment of GGR technologies are needed to meet Paris Agreement obligations.^[5]

The Climate Change Committee considers that at least 5 million tonnes of CO₂ (MtCO₂) per year by 2030 are needed to be captured through GGR,^[6] and that between 75 and 175 MtCO₂ will need to be stored annually by 2050.^[7] Similarly, the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) has concluded that the Government should commit to the wide-scale deployment of new GGR technologies by 2030 in order to be able to meet its net zero obligations.^[8]

The UK Government has indicated that NETs (specifically BECCS and DACCS) will play a role in reaching net zero, but has not given a firm commitment on their role or published a GGR strategy.^[9]

There are two proposed technologies that are considered to be most viable:^[10]

- Bio-Energy with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS). This combines biomass with Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) technology, whereby biomass (plant matter or organic waste) is used for energy generation, and the resulting CO₂ is then stored underground to prevent it from entering the atmosphere.^[13]
- Direct Air Carbon Capture and Sequestration (DACCS). This technology has been proposed to remove significant quantities of CO₂ by

- Direct Air Carbon Capture and Sequestration (DACCS). This technology has been proposed to remove significant quantities of CO₂ by placing large volumes of air in contact with chemicals known as sorbents. These chemicals capture CO₂ (through absorption or adsorption) and will be stored in the ground.^[14]

BECCS and DACCS are currently at an early stage of development. There is currently one BECCS power station being trialled in North Yorkshire (Drax)^[15] while a DACCS plant has been proposed in Scotland (Storegga and Carbon Engineering).^[16] Other projects are being, or have been, trialled in Switzerland, Canada, and elsewhere. Other early-stage DACCS projects focusing on marine carbon capture, such as SeaCURE (Sea Carbon Unlocking and Removal), also have the potential to support the UK Government's net zero goal.^[17]

Although there is a significant predicted role for NETs, there are uncertainties, concerns and challenges around their widespread use, such as the ability to develop and deploy technology at scale, ecological impacts or, in the case of BECCS, available land and access to sustainable biomass.^[18] There are additional questions about the storage of CO₂ once it has been captured, specifically around the available options for storage onshore (such as salt caverns or disused mines) and offshore (such as disused oil and gas wells).

The role that NETs are expected to play is premised on modelling that makes a number of assumptions about the future, including stable economic growth, lower costs for successfully developing GGR technologies and that GGRs will be accepted and used across social systems.^[19] These are known as climate change models and Integrated Assessment Models (IAMs). There is growing concern that some of these assumptions may not come to fruition, raising questions what contribution NETs can realistically make.

The Committee is inviting written submissions to inform two forthcoming evidence sessions on NETs, predominantly but not exclusively looking at BECCS and DACCS. Written evidence submissions should focus on, but need not be limited to, answering the following questions:

- What contribution could NETs (through DACCS, BECCS, and/or other NETs) make to achieving net zero by 2050?
- Which 'hard to decarbonise' sectors could benefit most from NETs, and which should be prioritised?
- At what technological stage are current NETs, and what is the likely timeframe that will allow NETs to be operational at scale in the UK?
- What are, and have been, the barriers to further development of NETs? How can such barriers be overcome?
- What, if any, are the links and co-benefits to other technological innovations, such as sustainable aviation fuel or sustainability in the energy sector?
- What are the trade-offs between availability of land and availability of sustainable biomass to make NETs a viable option in and beyond the UK?
- What are the options for the storage of captured carbon, whether onshore or offshore?
- What other drawbacks for the environment and society would need to be overcome to make NETs operational?
- Given the proposed role of NETs in climate change modelling, is there a danger of over-reliance on these technologies in net zero strategies?
- How should the UK Government support the further development of NETs?
- What policy changes, if any, are needed to ensure the UK gains a competitive advantage and remains at the cutting edge of this sector?
- The Government has indicated it will publish a Biomass Strategy in 2022, including the role of BECCS. What should be included in this strategy?

Written evidence should be submitted through the Committee's web portal by **Thursday, 28 October 2021 at 5pm. Respondents need not answer all the questions and evidence need not be limited to addressing the questions listed above.** Submissions should be not more than 3,000 words but shorter submissions are welcomed and encouraged.

and ask organisations to bear this in mind when we ask them to choose a representative. We are currently monitoring the diversity of our witnesses.

It is recommended that all submitters familiarise themselves with the Guidance on giving evidence to a Select Committee of the House of Commons which outlines word count, format, document size, and content restrictions.

References

[1] Nature-based solutions are based on protecting, managing, restoring or creating natural or modified ecosystems, on land or in marine environments, to mitigate climate change by absorbing greenhouse gases. Nature-based solutions are currently being investigated by the House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee ([Nature-based solutions for climate change](#)).

[2] HM Government. 2019. [The Climate Change Act 2008 \(2050 Target Amendment\) Order 2019](#).

[3] HM Government. 2019. [UK becomes first major economy to pass net zero emissions law](#). Press release from BEIS and the Rt Hon Chris Skidmore MP.

[4] Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology. 2012. [Low Carbon Technologies for Energy-Intensive Industries](#).

[5] Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology. 2020. [Bioenergy with carbon capture and storage \(BECCS\)](#).

[6] Climate Change Committee. 2021. [Progress in reducing emissions: 2021 Report to Parliament](#), p.24.

[7] Climate Change Committee. 2019. [Net Zero – The UK’s contribution to stopping global warming](#), p.181.

[8] National Infrastructure Commission. 2021. [Engineered greenhouse gas removal](#).

[9] HM Government. 2020. [The Energy White Paper: Powering our Net Zero Future](#). Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

[10] HM Government. 2020. [The Energy White Paper: Powering our Net Zero Future](#). Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

[11] Climate Change Committee. 2020. [The Sixth Carbon Budget: The UK’s path to Net Zero](#).

[12] National Infrastructure Commission. 2021. [Engineered greenhouse gas removal](#).

[13] Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology. 2020. [Bioenergy with carbon capture and storage \(BECCS\)](#).

[14] Gambhir, A. and Tavoni, M. 2019. [Direct Air Carbon Capture and Sequestration. How It Works and How It Could Contribute to Climate-Change Mitigation](#). One Earth 1:4, pp.405-9.

[15] Drax. [BECCS and negative emissions](#). Drax website.

[16] BBC News. 2021. [Climate change: Large-scale CO2 removal facility set for Scotland](#).

[17] GOV.uk. 2021. [Projects selected for Phase 1 of the Direct air capture and greenhouse gas removal programme](#). Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology. 2020. [Bioenergy with carbon capture and storage \(BECCS\)](#).

[19] Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology. 2020. [Bioenergy with carbon capture and storage \(BECCS\)](#).



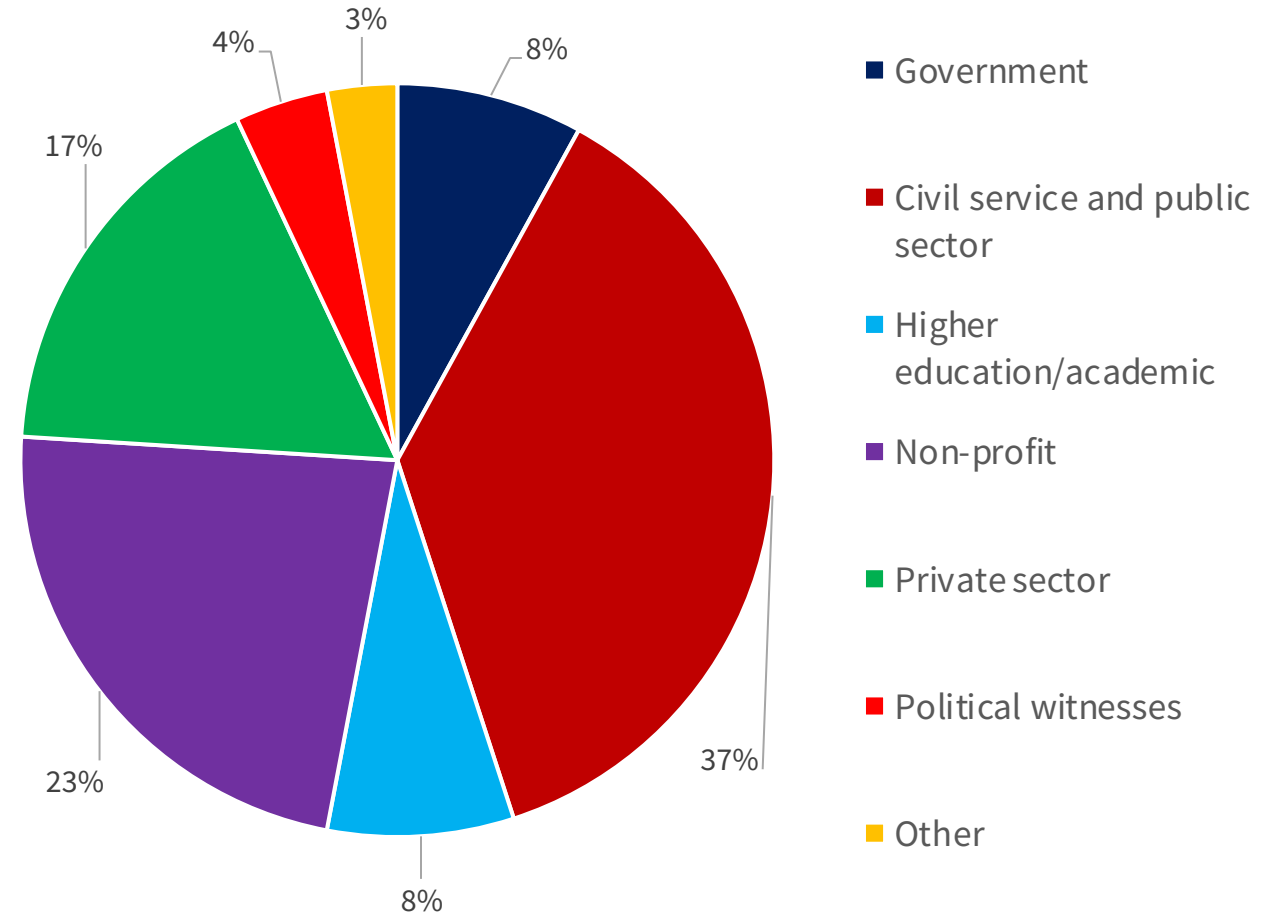


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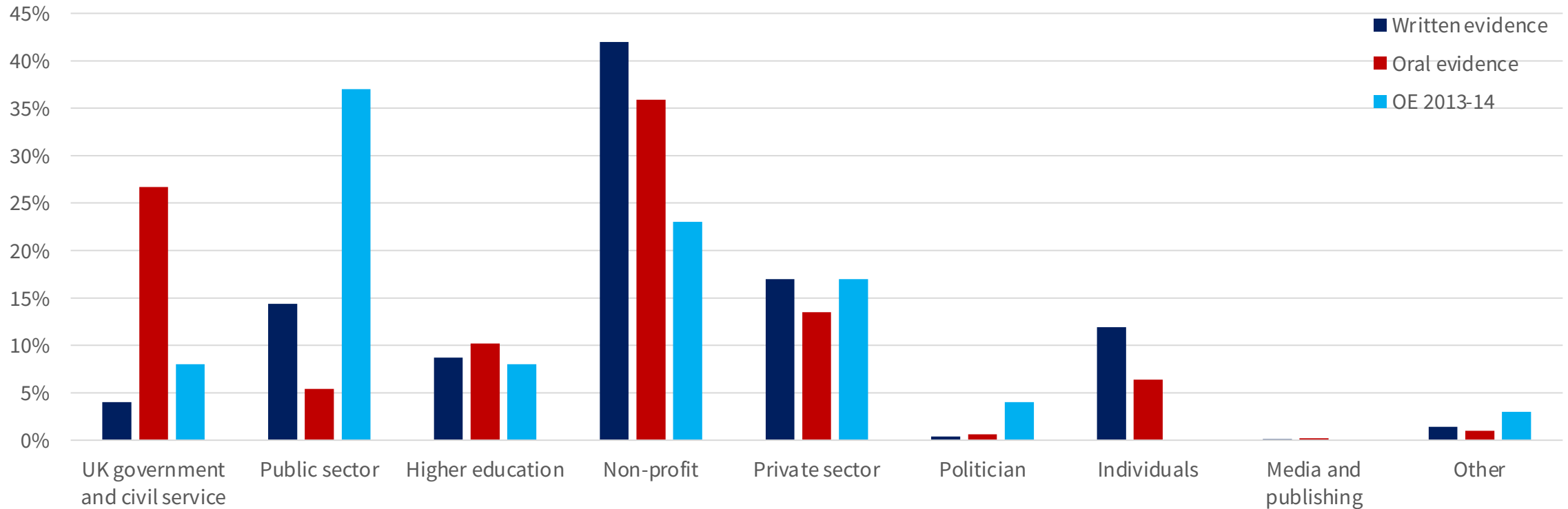
Previous research: OE 2013-14

- Organisational breakdown →
- Gender:
 - 24% women
 - 76% men
- Geography: dominance of London and South England



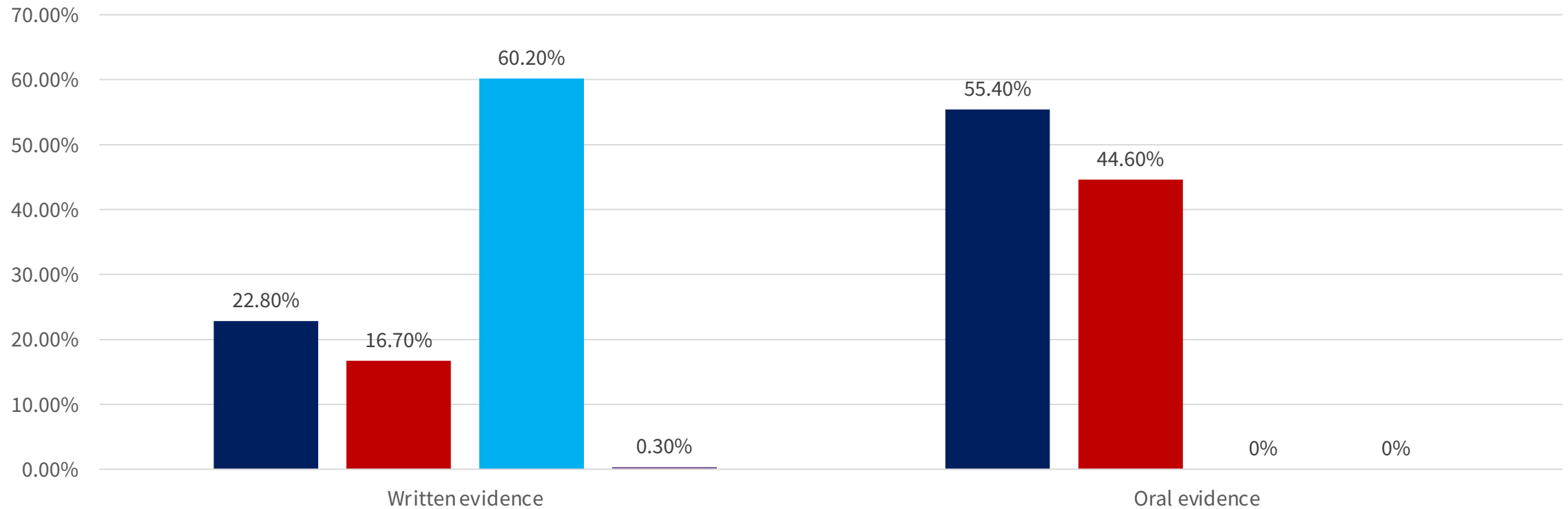


2021-22 (interim): organisational affiliation in WE and OE (%)



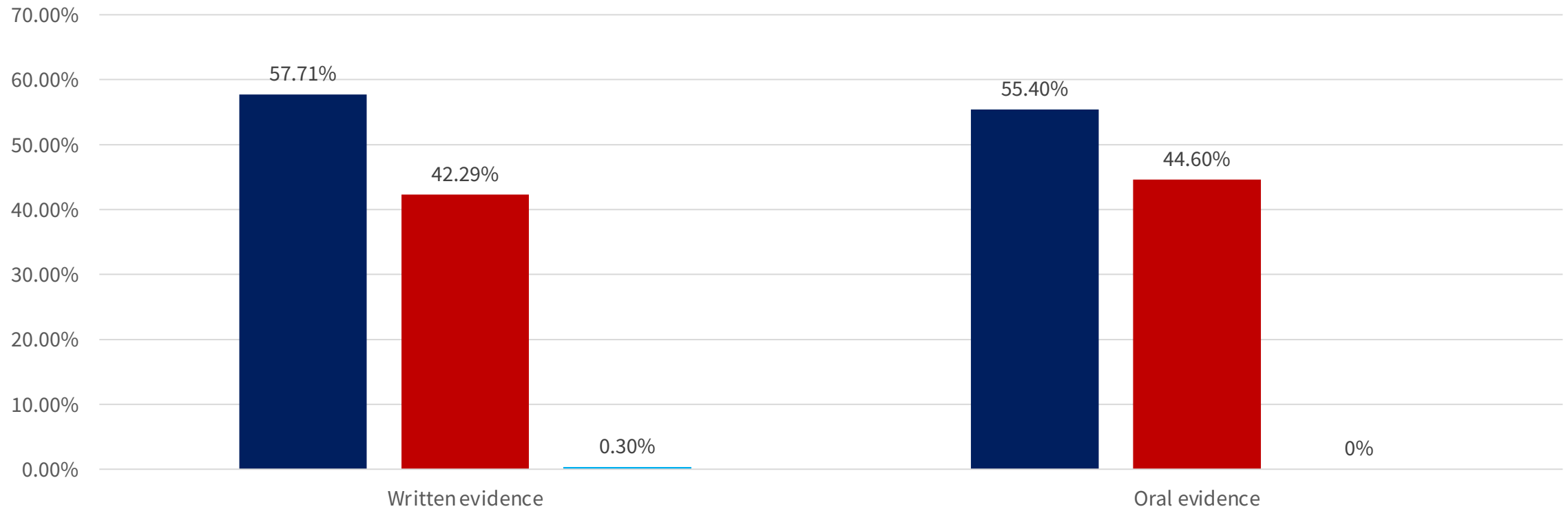


2021-22 (interim): men (dark blue), women (red), and org. only (light blue)



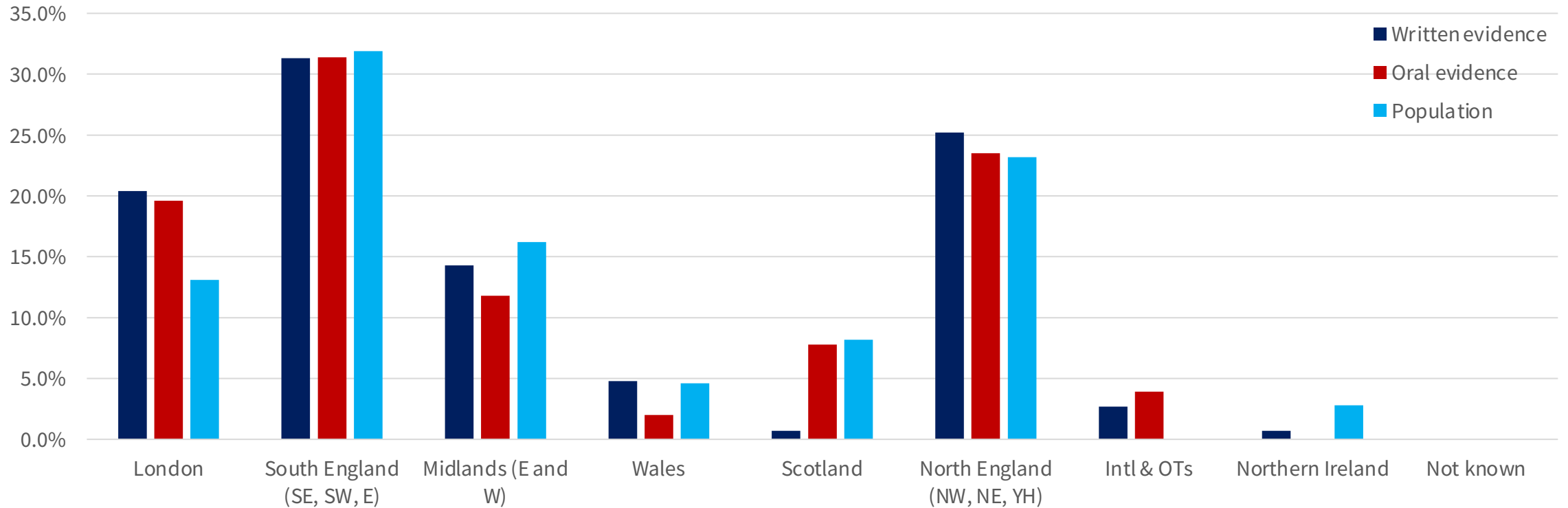


2021-22 (interim): men (dark blue) and women (red) only






2021-22 (interim): geography in WE (blue) and OE (red) (%) – HEI only





How is WE and OE used?




 House of Commons
 Environmental Audit Committee

Building to net zero: costing carbon in construction

First Report of Session 2022–23

Report, together with formal minutes related to the report

Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 11 May 2022

HC 103
 Published on 26 May 2022
 by authority of the House of Commons

Building to net zero: costing carbon in construction 15

normal, the costs of the low embodied carbon building should be lower than the cost of the high embodied carbon building, however it is obviously down to what is normal in industry and what skillsets people have.

If we replace a concrete frame and all brick and block houses with timber-framed houses, then you can reduce embodied carbon by about half. However, if you do not have the skillset to do that, and if you do not have the supply chains to provide that, you will not realise those cost savings. In theory, it should be a cost saving.⁴¹

30. There was consensus in the evidence we heard that the standardisation of the WLC assessment process, through regulation, would substantially reduce costs. This in turn would reduce the costs of low-carbon construction.

Scheduling the introduction of whole-life carbon assessments

31. Government commitments to the introduction of WLC assessments have lacked a clear timeline for implementation, an issue consistently raised by our witnesses.⁴² Dr Gieseckam told us that while the Heat and Buildings Strategy and the Net Zero Strategy represented “a step forward on embodied carbon in terms of there being some future commitments around it”, the timeline was “very vague”. He said:

In particular, in the net zero strategy, we had the statement that, “Government aims to support action in the construction sector by improving reporting on embodied carbon in buildings and infrastructure with a view to exploring a maximum level for new builds in the future.”[...] We also saw, in the Government’s response [...] to the annual progress report from the Committee on Climate Change [for 2021], a commitment again around embodied carbon but, again, with no timeline stating when they intended to enact this or what the details of that would be.⁴³

32. The architects who gave evidence to us consistently recommended that a clear timeline for the adoption of WLC assessment as a mandatory requirement for construction was needed to increase professional knowledge and capability in embodied carbon and provide the necessary signals for the construction industry to invest in managing it.⁴⁴ The Architects Climate Action Network have recommended that mandatory reporting be introduced in 2022, followed by the introduction of limit values in 2025, which will then be reduced over time.⁴⁵ The Part Z campaign, which seeks to introduce mandatory WLC assessments as part of building regulations, recommends a similar timeline, with the introduction of mandatory assessments starting in 2023.⁴⁶

Q74
 42 Q9, Q14, Q59, Q172
 43 Q59
 44 Rachael Owens (Architect at Buckley Gray Yeoman); Seb Laan Lomas (Head of Sustainability at Hopkins Architects) (SBE0295); Joe Penn (Architect at Rock Townsend); Matteo Sarno (Architect at Bolto Sarno) (SBE0126); Joe Giddings (Campaigns Coordinator & Project Director at Architects Climate Action Network & ASBP); Sophia Ceneda (Sustainability Lead at Glenn Howells Architects & Director at Carbogno Ceneda Architects) (SBE0119)
 45 Rachael Owens (Architect at Buckley Gray Yeoman); Seb Laan Lomas (Head of Sustainability at Hopkins Architects) (SBE0295)
 46 Will Arnold et al, [Part Z Proposal](#), (July 2021)



Findings 1: What counts as ‘evidence’? (1)

- Written evidence
 - Anybody can submit through portal online
 - Mostly published – but legal and admissibility checks made
 - Highly valued by officials and used as basis for briefing papers
- Oral evidence
 - Invitation only (suggestions by staff; formal invites through committee)
 - Highly valued by MPs and used by them to inform their views
- Use of innovations: committee visits, focus groups, surveys, use of social media, etc.
- Oral evidence is the basis for final reports and published outputs



Findings 1: What counts as ‘evidence’? (2)

- Factors that affect evidence use
 - The question of ‘who?’ matters for credibility and to identify type of knowledge
 - The question of ‘why?’ matters to understand political/financial motivations
 - Political and policy value of a submission is important
- Further themes
 - Evidence is bound up with process and procedure
 - Impact on MPs: evidence is used to inform rather than persuade
 - Evidence is *one* consideration of many: politics, power, justice, etc. matter

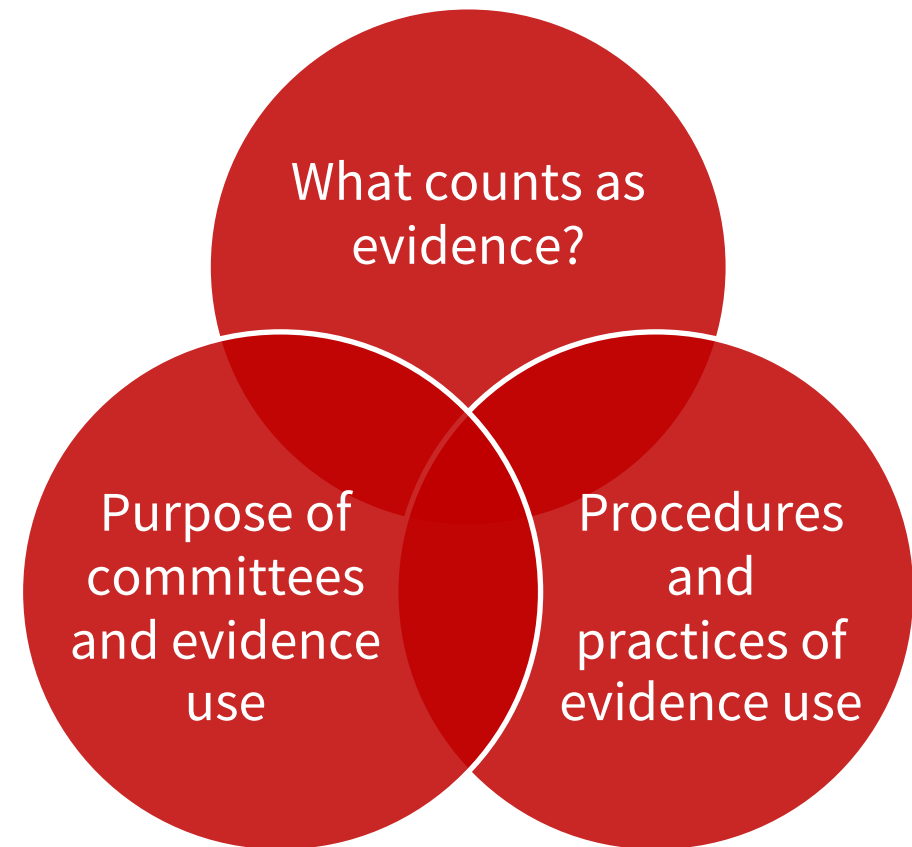


Findings 2: Changing trends and practices

- Diversifying evidence use: lived experience has grown significantly
 - Incorporated through different formats: written evidence, surveys, focus groups
 - Greater volumes pushing at the limits of what the process is designed to do?
- A growth of emphasis on diversity and inclusion
 - Long-standing tradition for political diversity (Geddes, 2021)
 - A focus on gender- and diversity-sensitive parliaments including committees (IPU, 2011; Childs, 2016)

Findings 3: Challenges for committees

- Some challenges:
 - Significant growth in the volumes of written evidence
 - Unclear what principles underpin the value of lived experience (or how to integrate)
 - No consensus about the importance (or not) of representativeness of witnesses
 - Pressures on staff: time-poor, under-resourced, training around innovations
- How to achieve ‘good’ evidence use?





Implications: Understanding ‘good’ evidence?

- What principles should underpin ‘good’ evidence use in a democratic institution, such as a parliamentary committee?
 - What do we mean when we talk about ‘good’ or ‘best available’ evidence?
 - Are these principles unique vis-à-vis other organisations (e.g. governments)?
- What organisational procedures should parliaments (and specifically committees) adopt to promote those principles of ‘good’ evidence use?
 - How does this affect the functionality of committees in general?
 - My report focuses on practical recommendations (pillars of evidence, eligibility)

Gathering and consuming knowledge

- POST stakeholder interviews
- Research by librarians
- Committee inquiry processes
- MPs' and peers' own research

Synthesising and producing knowledge

- POSTnotes
- Library briefing papers
- Committee reports
- Parliamentary speeches

Evaluating and using knowledge

- Parliamentary debates
- Committee recommendations
- Constituency work
- Informing votes by parliamentarians

The UK
Parliament
as a
**knowledge
institution**

ERC Starting Grant (funded by UKRI) 2024-29

Studying Parliaments and the Role of Knowledge (SPARK)

Re-thinking parliaments as knowledge institutions

Objectives to examine:

- (1) Patterns and practices of knowledge use
- (2) Values underpinning knowledge use
- (3) Impact of knowledge use on parliamentary functions

Ambitious comparative research design

Case study approach:

- (1) Seven parliaments at national, sub-national and supra-national levels
- (2) Three thematic policy areas with significant challenges for democracy

Wide-ranging tools

Mixed-methods:

- (1) Citation analysis
- (2) Corpus analysis
- (3) Stakeholder database
- (4) Interviews
- (5) Observation
- (6) Qual. text analysis

Sparking
debates about
the health of
democracies



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Questions?



3. Strengthening knowledge mobilisation with parliaments



KE activity	Northern Ireland Assembly	National Assembly for Wales	Scottish Parliament	UK Parliament
Host academic (post-PhD) fellowships	No	Yes: open and directed calls; organised by Research Service; funded by IAAs/ ESRC with limited top-up funding available; hosted by Senedd Research	Yes: organised by SPICe; funded by a mixture of universities, IAAs and ESRC; hosted by SPICe	Yes: POST Academic Fellowship scheme, funded by combination of IAAs and universities, and hosted across Parliament (e.g. POST, committees, libraries, education and engagement, restoration and renewal)
Host collaborative fellowships	No	No	No	Yes: Learned societies and charities, including British Ecological Society, Institute of Food Science and Technology, Royal Society of Chemistry, SSCP and SCENARIO DTP fellowship, Wellcome Trust Humanities and Social Science Programme
Host PhD fellowships (UKRI Policy Internships, funded by UKRI)	Yes: hosted by RaISe	Yes: hosted by Senedd Research	Yes: hosted by SPICe	Yes. Organised by POST but seconded to libraries and committees in both Houses, as well as being based in POST; also, PSA-Parliament PhD Internship
Host other ad hoc fellowships (both PhD and post-PhD)	Yes: Fulbright Scholars	Collaborative PhD on Brexit with University (starts in 2019); also, Wales ESRC DTP 3-month PhD placement on Assembly Reform work (funded by the Assembly)	Yes: currently hosting action research PhD on Sustainable Development (University of Stirling), embedded in SPICe	No, but other forms of collaboration between academic partners and Parliament (e.g. for project funding, Restoration & Renewal, etc.)
Up-to-date online knowledge hub for academics and KE staff	Yes: https://kess.org.uk ; http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/research-and-information-service-raise/northern-ireland-assembly-research-register/	Yes: https://www.assembly.wales/en/bus-home/research/academic-engagement/Pages/default.aspx	Yes: https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/100471.aspx	Yes: https://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/research-impact-at-the-uk-parliament/
Coordinate formal KE networks	Yes: KESS Memorandum of Understanding, including KESS Panel)	No	Yes: Scottish Parliament Academia Network (SPAN) and Ask Academia (KE mailing list)	No
Establish and support framework agreements	No	Yes: Brexit Framework	Yes: SPICe Research Framework Agreement	No
Identify advisers (committees)	Yes: RaISe and committee staff	Yes: Senedd Research and clerks	Yes: no formal/shared database between SPICe and committees	Yes: POST and committee staff
Identify/approach academics to provide committee evidence (oral/ written)	Yes: RaISe and committee staff	Yes: Senedd Research and clerks	Yes: SPICe and committee staff	Yes: POST and committee staff
Seek input into/review of briefing papers	Yes: RaISe	Yes: Senedd Research	Yes: SPICe	Yes: all POST products are internally and externally peer-reviewed; may feed into library briefings

KE activity	Northern Ireland Assembly	National Assembly for Wales	Scottish Parliament	UK Parliament
Attend conferences/workshops	Yes: ad hoc; staff have access to limited funding, time permitting	Yes: ad hoc; staff have access to limited funding, time permitting	Yes: ad hoc; staff have access to limited funding, time permitting	Yes: ad hoc; committee staff, libraries and POST have access to limited funding, time permitting
Train members, their staff and legislative staff to engage with academics	Yes: ad hoc, on the job training provided by RalSe	No	No	Yes: historically ad hoc, organised by POST in conjunction with other sections; training programmes in development for officials, MPs and MPs' staff
Provide legislative staff as members of steering groups/boards/research institutes	Yes: RalSe (e.g. KESS Panel, Access Research Knowledge Advisory (ARK), ESRC Understanding Society Governing Board, local universities' REF Impact Case Study Panels and Academic Prize Panels; no central records	Yes: Research Service staff; ad hoc, no central records	Yes: ad hoc, no central records (e.g. staff member on Scottish Policy Research Exchange (SPRE); SUII)	Yes: ad hoc, no central records
Contributions to university teaching/courses	Yes: Legislative Studies and Practice MA at QUB (currently suspended); invited contributions to courses at local universities	Occasional invited contributions only	Yes: invited contributions to courses only	Yes: organise Parliamentary Studies module across 25 HEIs; invited contributions to courses
Organise regular/structured seminar series	Yes: KESS	No	Yes: Brexit breakfast seminars; SPICe seminar series; joint seminar series with Scotland's Futures Forum	No
Organise one-off seminars/events	Yes: RalSe	Yes: Senedd Research	Yes: SPICe and Scotland Futures Forum	Yes: POST, committee staff and libraries; public and private
Organise private briefings for members	Yes: RalSe and committee staff	Yes: Senedd Research and clerks	Yes: SPICe and committee staff	Yes: POST and committee staff
Invite blogs, single or co-authored	Yes; blogs from UKRI PhD Interns as part of their placements	Yes: Senedd Research	Yes: SPICe via Framework Agreement; blogs from interns and fellows published as part of their placement	Yes: HC Library (https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk), authored only by staff
Contribute towards blogs and	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

A map showing mechanisms used by
parliaments around the world to access and
harness academic research

2,473 views

Published on 9 December 2022

SHARE

Map of mechanisms

All items

Developed by Vicky
Ward and Mark
Monaghan

<https://ipen-network.org/global-mapping/>

Made with Google My Maps



Map data ©2023 Terms 1,000 km

Google My Maps

Keyboard shortcuts



Developing (academic) engagement with parliaments

What are the benefits of engaging with parliaments? What resources do parliaments offer practitioners?

What are the commonalities that you observe between your KM work and parliaments – if any?

What lessons could – and should – parliaments learn from your research/practice to attain ‘good evidence’?

Conclusions



We need to pay attention to representative institutions at a time when questions over knowledge use in democratic politics is under scrutiny



Parliaments are multi-faceted organisations that can be described as ‘knowledge institutions’ – with nuanced practices of knowledge



Much more needs to be done to understand the challenges for democratic institutions and how to attain ideals of ‘good’ knowledge use



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH



Thank you!

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