



UK Parliament
POST

Bridging research and policy

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“

POST is the global torchbearer for science in politics and policy-making with its easy-to-digest, top quality, peer-reviewed and impartial analysis of the key policy issues facing Parliament. ”

Adam Afriyie MP

About POST

POST, also known as the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, is a bicameral body that bridges research and policy. With more than 30 years of experience in sourcing reliable and up-to-date research evidence for the UK Parliament, POST is one of the first bodies of its kind in the world.

Our flagship briefings are impartial, non-partisan, and peer-reviewed. They cover the areas of biology and health, energy and environment, physical sciences and computing, and social sciences. Timely and forward thinking, they are designed to make scientific research accessible to the UK Parliament.

Beyond that, POST:

- Organises parliamentary horizon scanning activities.
- Offers a range of services to Select Committees.
- Holds seminars and events for UK Parliament and the public.
- Facilitates knowledge exchange between UK Parliament and research communities.
- Develops best practice with legislatures across the globe and supports foreign research advisory bodies.
- Trains the next generation of policy shapers through the POST fellowship schemes.



POSTnotes and POSTbriefs

Our flagship output, the **POSTnote**, is a four page research briefing that reviews the current research landscape in emerging areas, ensuring accuracy and impartiality.

Interviews with tens of experts and stakeholders as well as rigorous internal and external peer review, make for a trusted report that help Members of Parliament, peers, and UK Parliament staff navigate complex research.

POSTnotes typically take two to three months to produce, allowing for a thorough literature review while ensuring timely production.

POSTnote topics are a product of horizon scanning undertaken by our team of advisers. Topic proposals are taken to a board of parliamentarians and external experts who in turn prioritise which proposals will be made into POSTnotes.

POSTbriefs are dynamic and strategic evidence syntheses that are produced rapidly in response to major developments in current affairs or Select Committee inquiries.

POSTbrief production focuses on summarising the available research literature, allowing them to be produced in one month.

As POSTbriefs don't follow the strict four-page limit, they can provide in-depth analyses of complex research, reactively presenting evidence on various topics of interest.

POSTbriefs can be requested by Select Committees of both Houses to aid in scoping inquiries or to provide background reading for Members.



Services for Select Committees

POST provides support* to **both Commons and Lords Select Committees** through a variety of knowledge brokering services. We do this by:

- Providing rapid overviews of existing POSTnotes.
- Offering reliable advice on sourcing external experts.
- Pointing towards research evidence for scoping, terms of reference, briefs, and reports.
- Circulating calls for evidence in a targeted manner.
- Helping with the appraisal of research that committees receive.
- Producing a POSTbrief on a desired topic.
- Taking recommendations for POSTnote topics.
- Seconding a fellow to assist a committee, typically for three months.
- Seconding a staff member for a short period (e.g. to assist with an inquiry).
- Providing training around research sourcing, use, and appraisal.



For POSTbriefs or general support appraising evidence please contact the Head of POST, Dr Grant Hill-Cawthorne.

For all other requests for support, please contact POST at post@parliament.uk

Events and Seminars

POST is committed to making research accessible to the UK Parliament. To achieve this we host a range of events throughout the year, which aim to give parliamentarians and staff the opportunity to hear directly from leading experts.

POST events range from closed intimate round-table discussions for parliamentarians, to presentations to academic delegations, seminars on key topics, and even full-day conferences open to the public, often in collaboration with major academic bodies.

We strive to ensure accessibility, representation, balance and impartiality, which is why our events draw from a wide range of topics and bring a diverse selection of specialists and stakeholders to share their expertise.

Knowledge Exchange

Research is integral to the work of POST, and for 30 years we have always maintained strong connections with the research community. To strengthen and develop these links within POST as well as across the whole of the UK Parliament, POST has formed a Knowledge Exchange Unit.

The Knowledge Exchange unit provides information, advice, and a point of contact at UK Parliament for the research community. It trains researchers, publicises opportunities for engagement, and supports academics who want to share their research expertise with UK Parliament. It connects UK Parliament with researchers, helping parliamentarians gain access to the best available research evidence.



International Work

POST is an established leader in the field of parliamentary technology assessment. As one of the first bodies to advise a legislature on science and technology, we are often asked for support by other legislatures looking to strengthen their capacity in technology assessment and the use of research.

In previous years we delivered a science advice capacity building programme for the Parliament of Uganda and hosted and trained research staff from the Ugandan and Malawian Parliaments.

Throughout 2018 we provided advice and training to over 25 academics participating in the Ciencia en el Parlamento ('Science in Parliament') initiative, which has led to the Spanish Congress approving a budget of €200,000 for a new science and technology office.

Other ongoing collaborations include projects with legislatures in Argentina, Chile, and Mexico.

In 2019, POST will be developing a new strategy for its international work and creating a set of resources to support other legislatures to strengthen their science advice capabilities. We are also preparing to take up the Presidency of the European Parliamentary Technology Assessment network in 2020, when we will be hosting technology assessment practitioners from around the world at the network's annual conference.

Fellowships

POST provides training to the next generation of policy shapers through a range of fellowship schemes. In partnership with their funder, successful PhD students are invited to UK Parliament to work at POST.

While fellows typically get to help us with the production of a POSTnote or POSTbrief, this once in a lifetime opportunity to view the epicentre of policy-making from the inside may also include a secondment to a Select Committee or the House of Commons or House of Lords Libraries.

By the end of their time at POST, our fellows learn how to write for policy with balance and impartiality. They also develop a unique understanding of Westminster, forge important relationships with key stakeholders, while often delving into a novel and exciting topic of research.



“ Wise decisions about science and technology are an essential part of good public policy. POST provides an indispensable advisory service about these scientific issues which is unbiased, accurate and of the highest standards. ”

Professor the Lord Winston

General POST enquiries:post@parliament.uk

Events enquiries:postevents@parliament.uk

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Image, page 9: Simon Shaw of Sense addresses the Work and Pensions Committee discussion on the issues surrounding DLA reform

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Image, pages 10-11: Youth Select Committee: Public session 5 July
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Image, page 13: POST fellows registering attendees at POST seminar
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