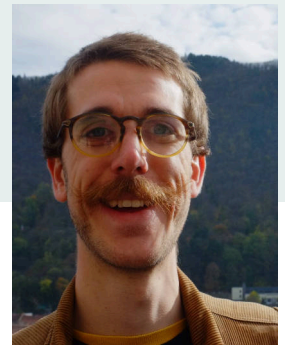


How POST research works



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The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) provides impartial, evidence-based briefings on the important research of the day. While our briefings are short, they are based on in-depth research gathered using a range of methods. However, our main approach is surprisingly simple – we ask people!

As a bicameral team, we bring together a wide range of stakeholders to contribute to research to help inform both Houses of parliament. POST research is commissioned by individual parliamentarians and committees, and can cover any topic from defence and digital to environment and health. Some of our recent briefings include winter mortality, defending UK airspace, and regenerative agriculture.

Our main briefing format, the POSTnote, is informed through written contributions, interviews and research, undertaken over three months to make sure that it is impartial, evidence-based, topical – and above all – useful to parliamentarians.

Who contributes to a POSTnote?

Let's take an example. For our recent POSTnote, *Winter Mortality*, the interviews used to inform the research included government departments, research institutes, academics, the NHS, local government, learned societies and charities.

How do they contribute?

Suggestions for POST research from Members and committees are reviewed by the POST board, made up of peers, MPs and experts from the research community.

If they are given a green light, a call for contributions is put on our website. Anyone can send their thoughts and research to POST, to help inform the scope and direction of research. A few will also be asked for an interview to dig deeper into the complexities and challenges of the issue.

After the final draft is completed, it gets sent around for external review to fact check everything that we've written. We consider all the comments, particularly where there is disagreement, correcting any inaccuracies and making sure nothing important to parliament is missed out.

What do they contribute?

Contributions take many forms. Academics get in touch to tell us about their latest research, sharing links to new papers or important historical or upcoming work.

Industry bodies tell us about their advancements, research and developments, alongside highlighting important policy discussions that they know have crucial real-world implications.

Charities and NGOs often represent the experiences of the wider public and those most affected by the topic.

Finally, government bodies and regulators clarify complex policy, inform us of upcoming announcements and keep us up to date on government direction.

Speaking to all sides of a discussion gives us an overview of the range of opinions and sentiment, ensuring the POSTnote gives a balanced view, and that it does not miss out on important perspectives and lived experience.

What research does POST do?

Alongside the interviews, our team of fellows (academics embedded with us for short periods of time), work with our permanent staff to conduct our own review of the evidence.

These academics help us to break down academic papers, pick out trends and important findings, and combine it with wider information from publications covering issues such as the latest government policy and stakeholder opinions. The bibliography for a 3,600 word POSTnote can be around 400 references long!

What about other researchers in parliament?

POST sits in the heart of parliament, with strong links to experts in the parliamentary libraries and committees in both Houses. These wider experts not only help us to scope ideas, but direct us towards key issues that parliamentarians are interested in.

We also work on joint research with the libraries and committee staff, embed POST fellows in these teams, and help them to access external academics and experts to help inform parliamentary scrutiny.

Get involved!

Members of both Houses can email POST to suggest research on any topic, or to request that we find them experts to speak with.

Experts wishing to contribute to our research should subscribe to be notified of new projects when they are announced and should look at our guidance for contributors.

Subscribe at: post.parliament.uk/subscribe