

Mobilising research for policy impact

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About CLOSER



The **interdisciplinary partnership** of leading UK social and biomedical longitudinal population studies.



UKRI ESRC-funded; based at the UCL Social Research Institute



Our mission is to increase the **visibility, use** and **impact** of longitudinal population studies, data and research to ensure that longitudinal evidence is used to address the health, social, economic and environmental challenges facing the UK, now and in the future.



What we'll cover today



Chapter one: What is policy impact?



Chapter two: The policy landscape



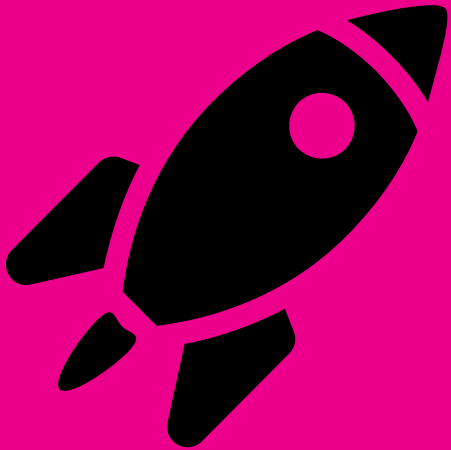
Chapter three: How to effectively mobilise research



Chapter four: Exercise - Policy briefing note



Chapter one: What is policy impact?



What are we trying to achieve?



Instrumental impact:

Influencing the development of policy, practice or service provision, shaping legislation, altering behaviour



Conceptual impact:

Contributing to the understanding of policy issues, reframing debates



Chapter two: The policy landscape



The policy landscape



Complex & multilayered



Delivery vs scrutiny



National, regional, local

e.g.



Northern Ireland
Executive



Northern Ireland
Assembly



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Senedd Cymru
Welsh Parliament



UK Government



UK
Parliament

The policy landscape



Complex & multilayered



Delivery vs scrutiny

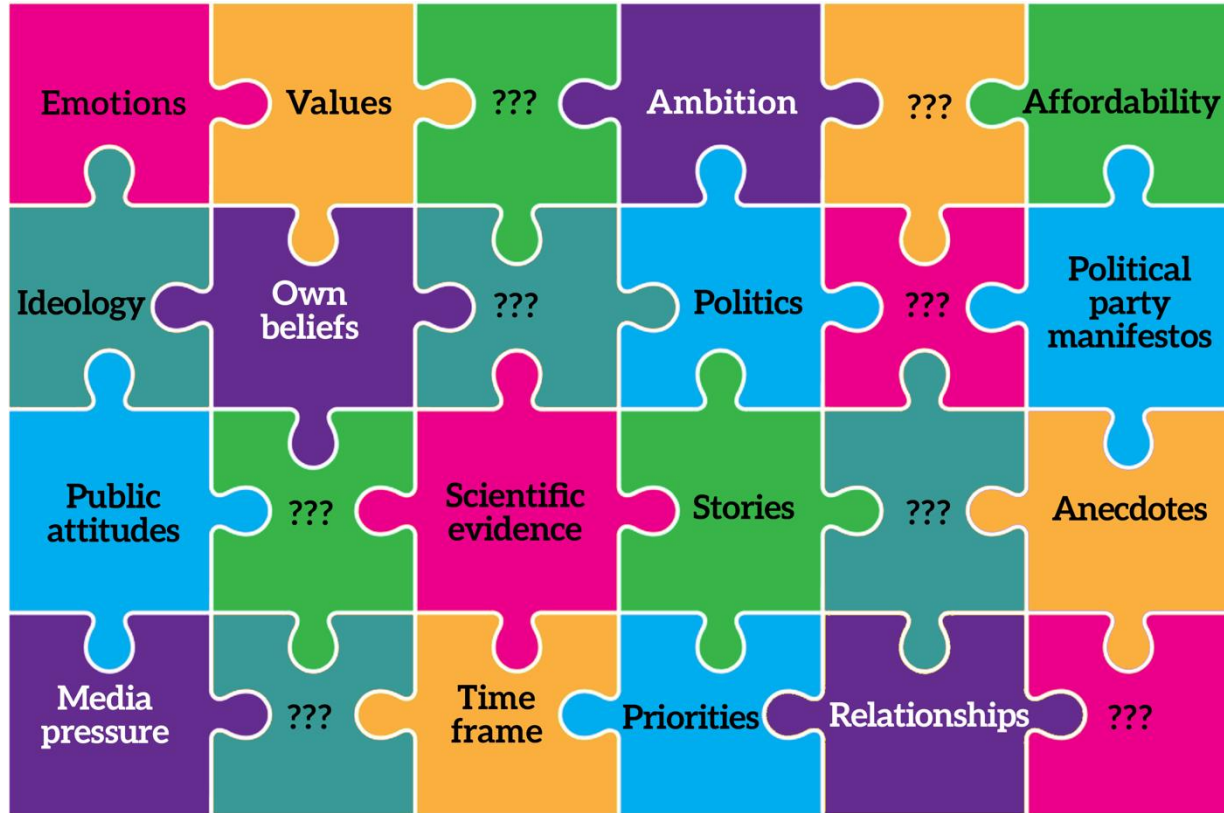


National, regional, local

e.g.



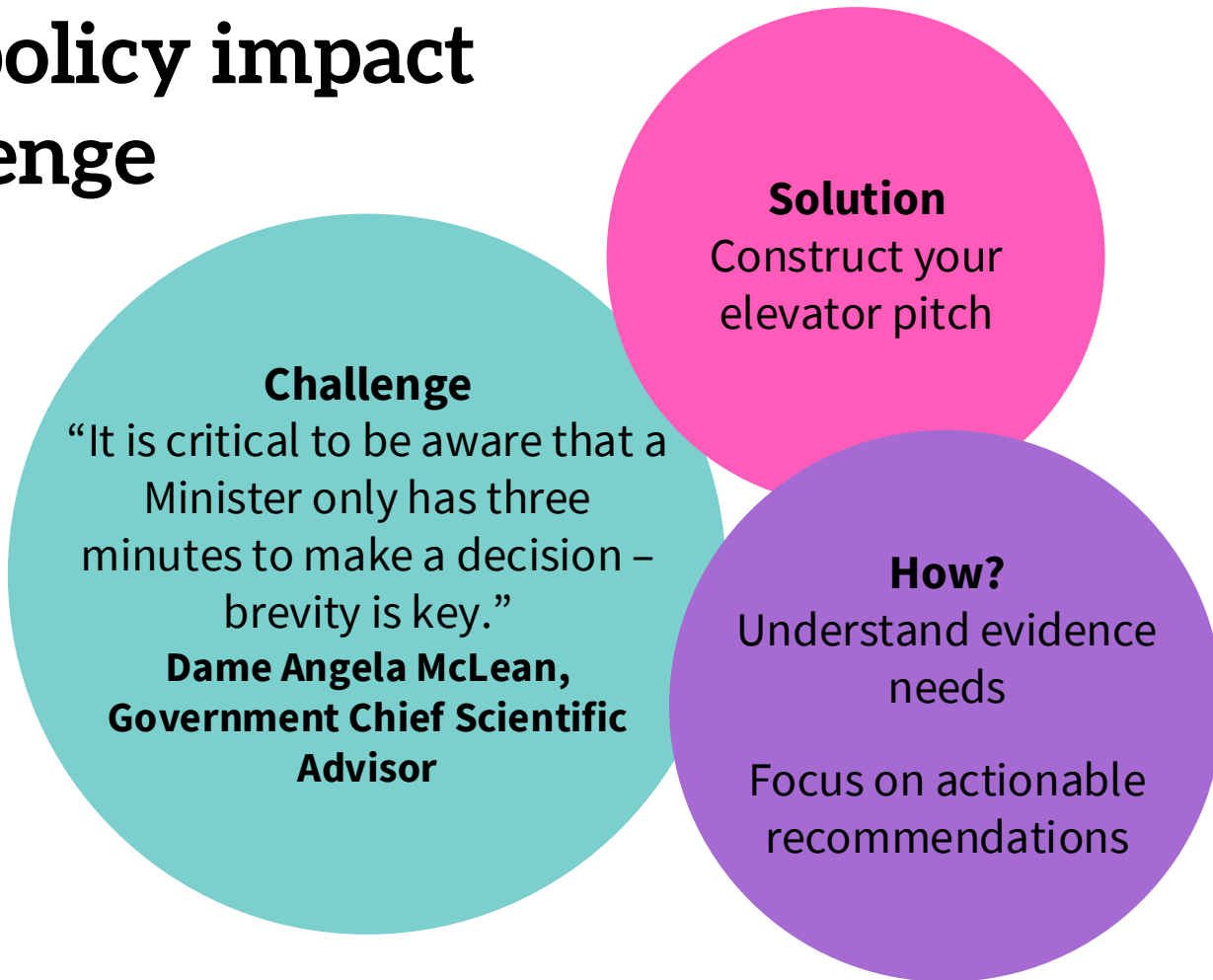
What really influences policymakers?



Scientific evidence is often not enough!



The policy impact challenge



The policy impact challenge

Challenge

"Most day-to-day policy work rests on the twin pillars of Google and asking people we know."

UK Government Official

"We used Perplexity AI to identify academics working in a research field"

**Civil Servant,
UK Government**

Solution

Increase your visibility & the findability of your research

How?

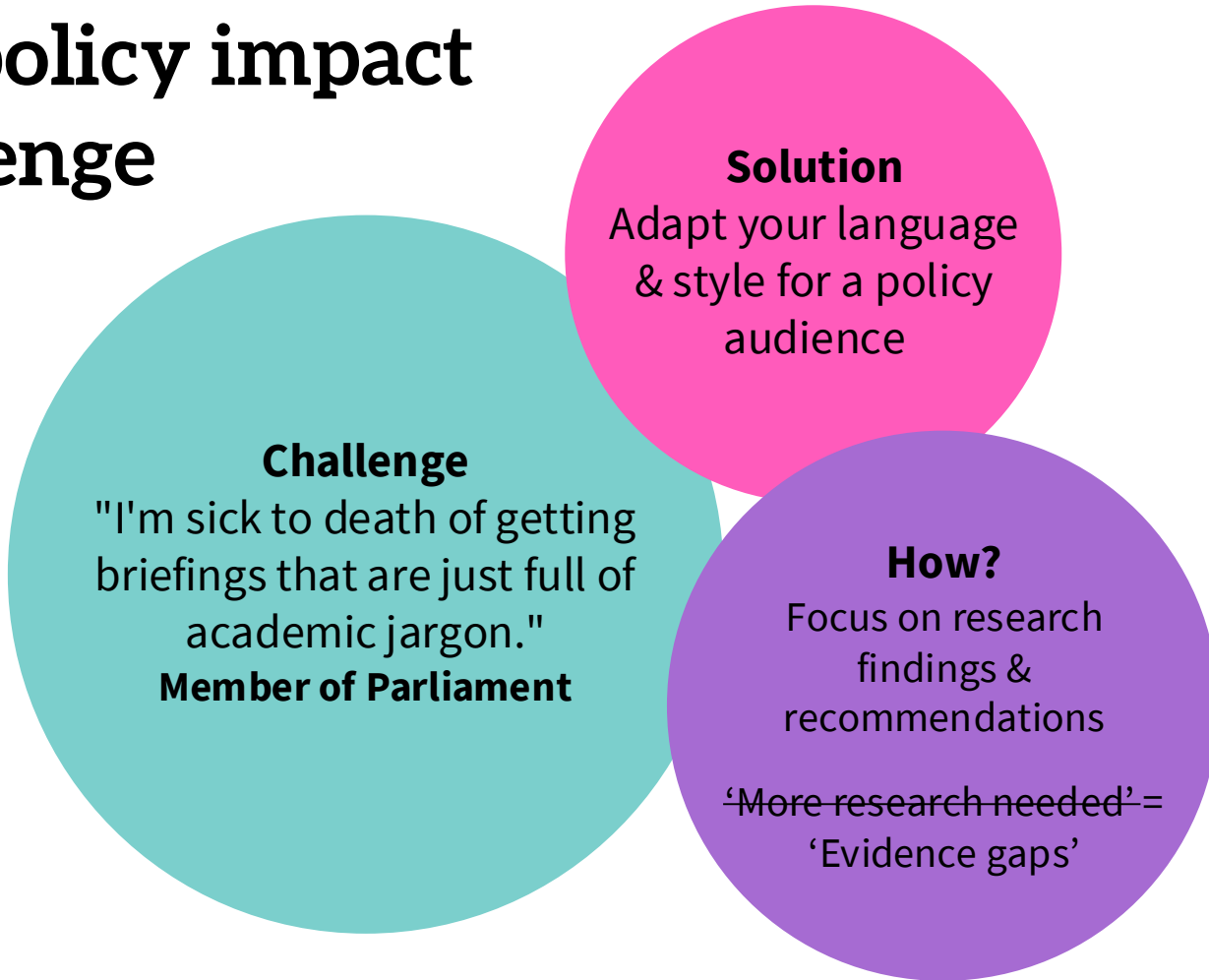
Academic profile with research interests

Build relationships

Respond to calls for evidence



The policy impact challenge



The policy impact challenge

Challenge

"I'm more likely to be asked by a Minister to comment on a podcast or newspaper article than an academic paper."

Government Advisor

Solution

Enhance your academic papers with accessible & easily digestible content

How?

Produce briefing notes, blogs, infographics (Taste, Snack, Feast)



Chapter three:

How to effectively mobilise research



Align to real-world policy challenges



UK Government 'Missions'



UK Government Departmental
Areas of Research Interest



Parliamentary Committee ARIs
(UK, Senedd, Scotland)



Parliamentary
Committee Inquiries



Utilise effective vehicles

Government Areas of Research Interest (ARIs)

Summarises most important research questions for each department

New ARIs! Welsh Government & Food Standards Agency

Parliamentary Committee Areas of Research Interest

Direct call for research evidence to support scrutiny

e.g. Senedd Committee ARIs & Scottish Parliament ARIs

Parliamentary Committee Inquiries

Invitation to submit written evidence to an inquiry

e.g. Work & Pensions Committee 'Youth Employment, Education & Training'



Use the wedding cake approach



- **'Taste, Snack, Feast' model*** enables the audience to access content most suited to their levels of interest and expertise.
- Multi-layered portal into different expressions of a single narrative.
- **'Taste'** = tweets and infographics.
- **'Snack'** = evidence briefing notes and blogs.
- **'Feast'** = research papers and data.

**Adapted from Forbes, C. (2017). Fake news, gifs and hashtags: responding to a changing media landscape. Risk & Regulation, 34, 28-31.*



Create a policy briefing note

- **Presentation** of research findings and recommendations is critical
- Our **bespoke interactive tool** can help
- See our **guidance** on producing a concise briefing note to capture policymakers' attention



closer.ac.uk/policy-hub/templates/



Respond to a committee inquiry

- Use our **bespoke online form** to create your own impactful written evidence submission
- **Guides** you through how to construct your submission
- Creates **document ready for you to submit** to the relevant Parliamentary Select Committee



closer.ac.uk/policy-hub/templates/



Write a blog to widen reach

- Present **complex ideas** in an **accessible way** to get your message across to more people
- Helps **widen reach** of research
- Increases your **visibility**
- Creates opportunities to **collaborate**



Tips for writing blogs

Keep it short (500-800 words)

Use plain language

Create captivating headlines

Break up your content

Present a unique voice

Remember accessibility



Bring your research to life with infographics

- Help audience **digest complex findings**
- Identify **key messages** and critical details from your research
- Easily **shareable** on social media to increase visibility



Tips for creating infographics



Be on brand



Include key contact info



Pull out key statistics



Use appropriate dimensions



Keep text to a minimum



Remember accessibility



Use social media to increase visibility

- Vehicle for disseminating research findings as part of a **package approach**
- **Connect** with researchers, academics, policymakers & relevant organisations
- **Open channels** for collaboration, knowledge sharing and advice



Tips for social media



Be consistent



Re-purpose your content



Include different media



Be wary of trolls



Tag other users



Remember accessibility



The wedding cake in practice

PLOS | MEDICINE

RESEARCH ARTICLE

How Has the Age-Related Process of Overweight or Obesity Development Changed over Time? Co-ordinated Analyses of Individual Participant Data from Five United Kingdom Birth Cohorts

William Johnson^{1,2}, Leah J. Drew^{1,2}, Rebecca Harty^{1,2}

¹ Medical Research Council Centre for Healthy Weight and Ageing, University College London, London, United Kingdom, ² University College London Institute of Child Health, London, United Kingdom

william.johnson@ucl.ac.uk

OPEN ACCESS

Background

There is a paucity of information on secular trends in the age-related process by which people develop overweight or obesity. Utilising longitudinal data in the United Kingdom birth cohort studies, we investigated shifts over the past nearly 70 years in the distribution of body mass index (BMI) and development of overweight or obesity across childhood and adulthood.

Methods and Findings

The sample comprised 56,632 participants with 273,843 BMI observations in the 1948 Medical Research Council National Survey of Health and Development (NSHD), ages 2–64 years; 1956 National Child Development Study (NCDS), 7–60; 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS), 10–42; 1991 Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC), 7–18; or 2002 Millennium Cohort Study (MCS), 3–11. Growth references showed a secular trend for more positive skewing of the BMI distribution at younger ages. During childhood, the 50th centile for all studies lay in the middle of the standard Deviate Scale. From normal weight range, but during adulthood, the age when a 50th centile first entered the overweight range (i.e., 25–29.9 kg/m²) decreased across NSHD, NCDS, and BCS from 41 to 38 to 30 years in males and 45 to 41 to 34 years in females. Trajectories of overweight or obesity showed that more recently born cohorts developed greater probabilities of overweight or obesity at younger ages. Overweight or obesity became more probable in NCDS than NSHD at early adulthood, but more probable in BCS than NCDS and NSHD in adolescence. For example, by age 10 years, the estimated probabilities of overweight or obesity in cohorts born after the 1960s were 2–3 times greater than those born before the 1960s (i.e., 0.229 [95% CI 0.219–0.242] in MCS males; 0.271 [0.265–0.276] in NSHD males). It was

PLOS Medicine | DOI:10.1371/journal.pmed.1001008 May 19, 2015

Paper

Evidence submission

Institute of Education

Health and Social Care Committee Inquiry: Childhood obesity

Written evidence from CLOSER, the home of longitudinal research

UCL

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Child obesity risk increases almost three-fold in five generations

Children born since 2000 are up to three times more likely than older generations to be overweight or obese by age 10, according to new study.

Researchers from CLOSER, a consortium of leading UK longitudinal studies, based on the body mass index (BMI) of more than 56,000 people born on or after 2000. They found that, compared to an older generation born in 1960, more than one-third of the age 10 children born in 2000 were overweight or obese by age 10, compared to roughly one in ten 10-year-olds today. Younger generations are also tending to gain weight more rapidly.

These findings will guide policymakers and health care professionals, as it is estimated that the obesity 'epidemic' will cost the UK's National Health Service £2.9 billion per year by 2050.

Dr Drew, who generated the new generation's 'evidence', said: 'It is not overweight people who are becoming heavier. For example, the heaviest 2 per cent of people born in 1960 had a BMI of around 20 by the age of 11, compared to 21 for the most obese children born in the last of the epidemic.'

People are also becoming overweight or obese at an increasingly younger age. In the researchers' study, 10% of children born in 1960 were overweight or obese by the time they were 4½ years old, compared to 34% when born in 2000.

Blog

Social media

CLOSER
@CLOSER_UK

Child obesity increases 3-fold in 5 generations – scale of the problem for today's #childobesity strategy bit.ly/1GoZZz@ESRC

8:36 AM · Aug 18

CLOSER
@CLOSER_UK

News item up now: CLOSER research underpins Government's Child Obesity Strategy bit.ly/2boFPe7@ESRC@IOE_London

9:47 AM · Aug 18, 2016

closer

The rise of the obesity epidemic

£22.9 bn per year

Childhood obesity is a public health emergency. In July 2016, the Government Office for Statistics estimated that the obesity 'epidemic' will cost the National Health Service £22.9 billion per year by 2050. But this is only one side of the story. Overweight and obesity are also a major cause of disability, with the 10% of the population who are obese in 2016, 10% more disabled than in 1960, 1970, 1990, 2000 and 2002.

Percentage overweight and obese at age 11 in each generation

Child obesity risk has increased three-fold in five generations

Every generation is heavier than the last

BMI in childhood (SD = 1 permille)

The infographic displays two line graphs. The first graph, titled 'Percentage overweight and obese at age 11 in each generation', shows a steady increase from approximately 10% in the 1960s to over 30% in the 2000s. The second graph, titled 'BMI in childhood (SD = 1 permille)', shows a similar upward trend in BMI values over the same period. Text boxes provide context on the £22.9 billion cost to the NHS by 2050 and the fact that every generation is heavier than the last.

Infographic



Chapter four:

Exercise – Policy Briefing Note



Join at menti.com | use code 3938 7873



Instructions

All instructions also on the Mentimeter

Individually:

1. Go to the **ARI database** ari.org.uk and **search** for your topic
2. Identify a **policy area / organisation relevant to your research**
(e.g. an ARI, a certain policy organisation, a policy “hot topic”)
3. Draft your **key messages** (guidance on the Menti)

With a partner (ideally someone not in your research area):

4. Read each others' key messages and give feedback



Join at menti.com | use code 3938 7873



Instructions

All instructions also on the Mentimeter

3. Draft your **key messages** (guidance on the Menti)
 - **Who you are:** Your expertise (1 sentence)
 - **Background:** What is the issue & why does it matter? (~1-2 bullet points)
 - **Research:** What does your research show? (~1-2 bullet points)
 - **Implications for policy:** “So what?” Why should the audience care?
 - **Recommendations:** “Now what?” What specific actions should be taken?

With a partner (ideally someone not in your research area):

4. Read each others' key messages and give feedback



Chapter five: Learning resources & bespoke tools



Policy Hub

Helping researchers mobilise their evidence
in the policy landscape

Free information, guidance, and bespoke
templates and tools

For both social and biomedical researchers

www.closer.ac.uk/policy-hub



Economic
and Social
Research Council



**Policymaking
explained**

**Engagement
guidance**



**Mobilisation
opportunities**

**Bespoke
templates**



Training Hub

For those familiar with longitudinal research who seek more advanced knowledge

Free materials for in-depth learning

Details of further training opportunities

www.closer.ac.uk/training-hub



Economic
and Social
Research Council



**Cross-study
research**



Data management



**Dissemination
& impact**



**Training
opportunities**



The home of longitudinal research

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