

GETTING RESEARCH HEARD AND USED: UNDERSTANDING AND ACHIEVING POLICY INFLUENCE

THIRD SECTOR RESEARCH FORUM CONFERENCE
17 FEBRUARY 2021

**Dr Sarah Weakley (Policy
Scotland, UofG)**

**Nick Bibby &
Dr Mariola Tarrega (SPRE)**



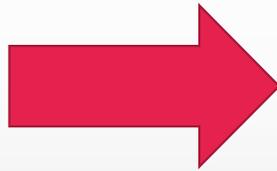


AGENDA

- Welcome
- Four Questions of Policy Engagement
- Who
- Breakout Session: Stakeholder Analysis (20 Minutes)
- What
- When
- How
- Question and Answer
- Thanks and Resources

FOUR QUESTIONS OF POLICY ENGAGEMENT

- **Who**
- **What**
- **When**
- **Where**
- **(And a bit of How)**



- Part 1 of today's workshop will focus on **Who**
 - Who are your stakeholders & understanding them
- Part 2 will focus on What & When
 - Framing and positioning your work for these stakeholders
- Resources on **How**

Important! None of this is gospel – our aim here is to give you some ideas, considerations and tools that are widely used for you to play around with in your own context



WHO ARE THE POLICY ACTORS THAT ENGAGE WITH TS RESEARCH?

- Research and evidence produced by and for third sector organisations are of interest to many policy areas (and usually more than 1)
- Useful to think of broad **POLICY ACTORS: people that make policy (legislators), people that design policy (civil servants), people that deliver policy (civil servants, public sector, third sector), people that influence policy (think tanks, universities, third sector/advocacy orgs)**
- Levels of influence and action: UK-wide (reserved policy areas), Scotland, regional, local authority, neighbourhood/ward
 - Engagement at local authority can also influence practice more notably if you can find the right person!



A CLUTTERED LANDSCAPE

Policy Actors in Parliament and Government:

- The distinction between reserved and devolved policy areas is not neat and tidy
- Parliament and Government are distinct bodies and there are lots of others
 - Identify the individual as well as the organisation
- Remember that policymaking institutions are complex – and the different parts don't talk always to each other
- Your evidence will likely be aligned with or sit alongside a Scottish Government Directorate. Analysts within these Directorates also produce lots of evidence that would be useful to be aware of.

Heads of Profession

Chief Researcher – Audrey MacDougall

Chief Economist – Gary Gillespie

Chief Statistician – Roger Halliday

Office of the Chief Researcher

Chief Social Policy Adviser – Carol Tannahill

- Office of the Chief SPA

Strategic Analysis

Corporate Analytical Services

Strategy Unit

Office of the Chief Economic Advisor

- Economic Analysis And Modelling
- Economic Support to Private Office
- Energy & Climate Change
- National Accounts
- Business and Digital
- Economic Strategy and Policy
- Employability Project Performance

Data, Statistics & Outcomes Division

- Analytical Data Infrastructure
- National Performance Framework
- Office of Chief Statistician & Data Officer
- Public Sector Data Sharing and Access

Analytical Services Divisions (ASDs)

Justice

- Policing
- Crime
- Criminal Justice
- Civil Justice
- Prisons
- Safer Communities

Local Government

- Council Tax
- Local Govt Finance, Local Taxation, Non-Domestic & Business Rates
- Local Governance & Reform
- Local Govt Econ Analysis

Education

- Advanced Learning And Skills
- Children and Families
- Learning
- ScotXed

Health & Social Care

- Care and Resources
- Population Health

Rural & Environment Science & Analytical Services

- Env Science & Analysis
- Research, Sponsorship Rural Science and Statistics and Analysis

Communities

- Built Environment
- Centre for Housing Market Analysis
- Equality and Social Justice
- Housing & Regeneration
- Rent Service Scotland
- Social Security
- Survey Mgmt

Marine Scotland

Analytical professions in agencies and Non-Ministerial Depts

Transport Scotland

National Records of Scotland

Scottish Prison Service

Revenue Scotland

Accountancy In Bankruptcy

Scottish Fiscal Commission

APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING YOUR AUDIENCE (1)



One way to map what policy areas and actors work in your space is a using a quick schematic, with your evidence in the middle.

Then consider:

- > Relevant policy areas
 - > National actors
 - > Local actors/orgs
 - > Individuals in those orgs (if known)

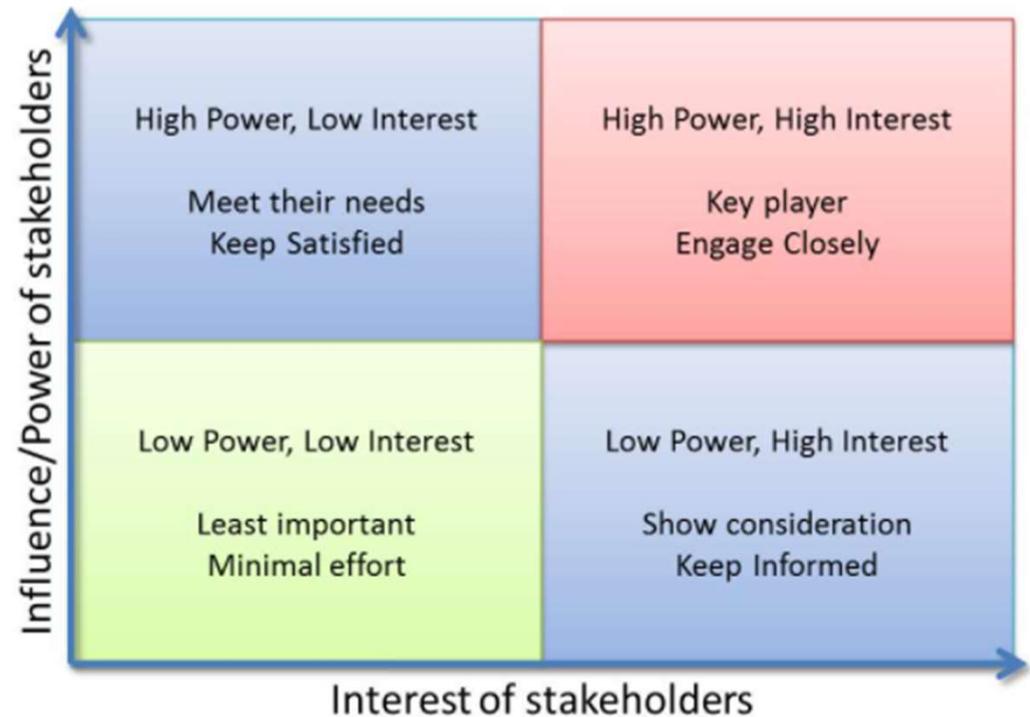
Mental Health:

- SAMH
- Health and Social Care Directorate
- Local Health Board/HSCP
- Voluntary Health Scotland
- Mental Health Fdn

Fiona Moss,
GGC HSCP
Head of
Health
Improvement
& Equalities

STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

- Another widely used tool for organisations to use when considering who and where to engage is Mendelow's matrix
- People map their stakeholders on a matrix based on the stakeholder's power to change policy/action and interest/alignment with the work
- Can help inform where and how much energy you place into engaging with each stakeholder



Stakeholders Analysis: Power/Influence-Interest Matrix

Stakeholders Management / By Carlos Eduardo Martins Serra



BREAKOUT SESSION

- **20 minutes: Stakeholder Mapping using Jamboard & Discussion**
- Think of a project or piece of research you have worked on/are working on
- Identify 2 stakeholders and place each sticky in of the quadrants in the Jamboard (organised like the matrix in previous slide)
 - Jamboard Link will be put in the breakout room chat by facilitator
 - Each sticky must be in a separate quadrant
- Facilitator will run through a selection to sticky notes and will ask participants to describe their project and rationale for placement in each quadrant
 - Questions can also consider previous or planned strategies for engagement, the type of information each stakeholder might want to know, what they already know and where your evidence fits into their work/agenda

WHAT: POSITIONING YOUR RESEARCH

When considering **what** to say, focus on framing your research:

- **Policy Question versus research questions:** Focus on the policy 'question' not the research 'answer'

Example: Policy Question versus Research Question

Policy Question: Greater evidence on the rate of exposure of adults to hate content online and the harm caused (UK Govt ARI, Dept Digital, Culture, Media & Sport)

Research Question: Cross-country differences in exposure and victimisation to different forms of online hate. (*Keipi et al 2017 in Online Hate and Harmful Content*)

- In general, the answer to a policy question has to be **implementable**: in this case, the question requires more evidence, which we can get. (Second question too big!)
- When getting to the **WHAT**, consider how the work speaks to previous, emerging and *new* issues in the policy area
 - Is your new work filling in gaps, affirming what is already known but in a new context, refuting previous work?

WHAT: POSITIONING YOUR RESEARCH

Overarching question: Why should this person care about this work?

Consider things like:

- **The types of research they already use** (Is this something new?);
- **Has the organisation started to consider a new direction** (e.g. what's in the Programme for Government, State of the City, Annual Reports that give their areas of future work)
- **Look ahead; what policy problems are coming down the line**

WHAT IS AN EXPERT?

A lot of the time policymakers are looking for expertise broadly rather than a narrow study – your WHAT may also be your expertise and experience on a policy topic.



WHEN

- **Academic time / organisational time / policy time**
 - Research from third sector organisations have the benefit of being produced usually at a faster pace than academics – this can be to your advantage!
 - By the time something is in the news it's too late to influence things.
- **Little When:** immediate timings or issues that are in vogue now that your evidence can speak to
 - Include horizon scanning in your scoping exercise (e.g. Programme of Govt, State of the City)
- **Big When:** most issues are perennial, so it is useful to know what is going on in the field elsewhere before approaching and make relationships as an 'expert'

HOW

Comms 101 & some tips

- **Relevance -> Clarity -> Brevity (->Novelty)**
- **Never use mass emails**
- **Be brief and offer more information**
- **Take pity on your audience**
- **Who is your audience:** what do they already know/think/believe & what do they *need* to know

Tools for engagement (a selection)

- Policy briefings
- Blog posts
- Research summaries
- Campaign/advocacy materials
- Social media

For examples, take a look at the [Policy Scotland website](#), *The Conversation*, [LSE blogs](#)



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- **Ideally by now there are some questions in the chat function for us to address**
- **But, please also use the Raise Hand function to ask us questions – about what was in the presentation or something else!**



CONTACT US & MORE RESOURCES

More information along these lines at **Scottish Policy and Research Exchange** website: <https://spre.scot/>

- Nick Bibby, Director: nick.bibby@spre.scot
- Mariola Tarrega, Digital Resources Coordinator: mariola.tarrega@spre.scot

Examples of policy engagement outputs/content on the **Policy Scotland** website, University of Glasgow: <https://policyscotland.gla.ac.uk/>

- Sarah Weakley, Research and Impact Officer:
sarah.weakley@glasgow.ac.uk

Resource list sent to you following this session!