Policy impact workshop
Influence through expertise



Mark Fuller

Mark has two decades of experience in developing and delivering policy-influencing programmes across a range of sectors, including work with academics at multiple universities. He's held leadership positions in two think tanks, ran policy for multinational businesses and advised leaders at dozens of private, public and third sector organisations as a consultant. Mark has been published by think tanks, written for trade and national press and appeared on national television and radio. Thanks to this he has a wide network of contacts across the media and in policy-making circles.



Arlen Pettitt

Arlen is a North East-based policy, content and communications expert, specialising in shaping and delivering thought leadership and research projects. He has worked in policy, marketing and communications roles for more than 15 years, including leading a consultancy in the transport sector and working in agencies with clients in financial services and higher education. He spent six years with the North East England Chamber of Commerce, engaging with regional and national policymakers and campaigning on behalf of the organisation's 3,000 members.



"There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about and that is not being talked about."

Oscar Wilde



Why would you want to build a public profile?



of your work and the
University you are part
of, so both you and your
institution merit the
recognition that comes
with a public profile.



Your work and expertise
can enhance public
understanding of complex
issues.

This is good for society and an important part of a university's civic mission.

Ability to influence

Profile can drive impact, both through building recognition among decision-makers and informing public debate.



What do high profile 'experts' look like?



Discussion

Please come up with some examples of experts - academic or otherwise - with public profiles that give them influence.

Let's discuss:

- How they have developed a public profile?
- How you would describe the nature of their profile?
- The type of influence they have

Generate media coverage

- Apply your expertise and analysis to the news agenda through comment and interview appearances.
- Introduce ideas and deepen understanding by writing for non-academic outlets.
- Shine a light on research work by securing coverage for emerging findings and outputs.

Contribute expert evidence

- Seek out opportunities to submit written evidence to formal processes particularly
 Government consultations and Select Committee inquiries.
- When the opportunity arises, give oral evidence to Select Committees.
- Explore opportunities to work directly with policymakers e.g. secondments, interchange programmes, working groups.

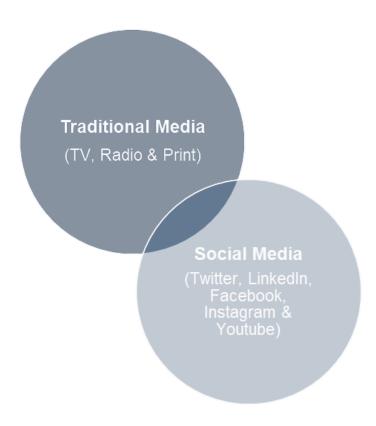
Appear 'on the circuit'

- Seek out think tanks, campaign groups, professional networks and any other policyinfluencing organisations that align with your interests and perspective.
- Monitor for conferences, panel discussions and other events you could speak at or attend.
- Network, make connections and build relationships with policy professionals and policy-engaged academic colleagues.

Generate media coverage

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What is the media, anyway?

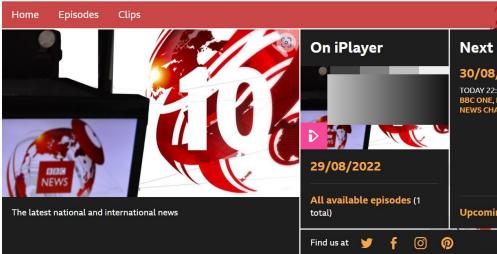


- The rise of 'digital' and social media has changed the way that people communicate with each other - and how they consume news.
- There are now more ways than ever to get your message across, but it can be difficult to cut through the noise.
- Increasingly, there is an overlap between traditional and social media channels - savvy communicators often make use of both.

Website

Broadcas †





On Demand

Social Media

Social media is personal...

- For some, it's a time-consuming distraction
- For others, it's a way of building a personal brand, connecting directly with journalists,
 policymakers and others, and accessing new ideas and information
- It might not be for you, but remember that social and traditional media channels are increasingly interdependent.

If it is for you...

- Be active there is a difference between having a profile and actively using your profile
- Be reactive it's called 'social' media for a reason
- Use your time wisely focus on social media platforms that are used by your target audience, and share content that meets their needs.



Shaping a story

What are you talking about?

The basic facts of the matter, what your story is about and the main details.

Why does it matter?

The reason your story is worth telling, why it's notable, new or important. And why it is credible.

How does it change anything?

The implications of what you're talking about.

Who cares?

The group or individuals who your story is likely to be of interest to.

When is it most relevant?

The most timely moment to tell your story.

Where will it best land?

The type of media your story most suited to – e.g. broadcast, print or online; local national or international; specialist or mainstream; hard new or feature?



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Government consultations

Government departments and agencies regularly run consultation exercises on new or changing policies.

Formal, written, public consultation will often be an important stage in the policymaking process. Consultation makes preliminary analysis available for public scrutiny and allows additional evidence to be sought from a range of interested parties so as to inform the development of the policy or its implementation.

Action: Search the list of open consultations to identify opportunities to submit evidence.



Parliamentary research functions

Parliament is host to a number of offices that collate evidence to support members in their work. The most significant are the Commons and Lords Libraries, which have teams of staff producing briefing papers and debate packs to aid members' understanding of issues being debated. Parliament is also host to organisations that facilitate Parliamentarians' engagement with external experts, including the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) and the Industry and Parliament Trust (IPT).

Action: Look through the topics being worked on by Parliament's Library staff and get in touch if you are able to offer expert contribution.



Parliamentary committees

Select Committees are small groups of MPs or members of the House of Lords that are set up to investigate a specific issue in detail or to perform a specific scrutiny role. Public Bill Committees scrutinise the passage of legislation. Both invite the public – including academics – to submit written evidence, and will then invite groups or individuals to give oral evidence. Sometimes Committees appoint specialist advisers - often academics - to support their work.

Action: 1) Look through the list of <u>open inquiries</u> to identify any opportunities to submit evidence. 2) Look through the full list of <u>Committees</u> and get to know the Clerk.



All-party parliamentary groups (APPGs)

Informal, cross-party groups formed by MPs and Members of the House of Lords who share a common interest in a particular policy area, region or country. Sometimes they conduct formal consultations. While they are not official parliamentary committees these groups can sometimes be influential because of their non-partisan, bicameral approach to an issue.

Action: Look through the <u>register of APPGs</u> and get in touch with the secretariat of any that your work and expertise is relevant to.



Opposition parties

Opposition parties will often hold their own consultations to help them formulate policy. Sometimes, these opportunities are open to all - at other times they are open only to party members.

Following last year's election defeat we are expecting the Conservatives to go, through an extensive policy review and development process.

Action: Keep an eye on announcements from the Conservatives, and on the right-leaning think tanks like Onward, Bright Blue and Policy Exchange.



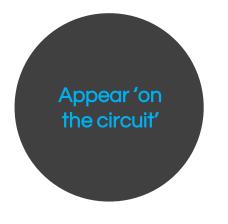
Policy commissions

Sometimes, independent experts will be invited by Government to lead a review into a particular policy issue. For example, Dame Carol Black's Review of Drugs or The Kerslake Commission into Rough Sleeping and Homelessness. On other occasions, think tanks may launch their own commissions to draw together evidence on an issue of concern. For example, the Poverty Strategy Commission hosted by The Legatum Institute.

Action: These are harder to spot, but a good starting point is to follow organisations you are interested in on social media, or sign up to their mailing list.

Top tips

- Keep your evidence short and to the point.
- Write in plain English and explain any technical terms.
- Where specific questions are asked, give priority to answering them over background on you and your work.
- Use section headings and numbered paragraphs.
- Do not submit material that has already been published elsewhere, but do quote from or refer to published material.
- Set out the actions you would like Government or others to take, and explain why these actions would improve things.
- If submitting to a Select Committee, include your thoughts about the most important questions that the Committee should ask the Government.
- Think about what you can bring to the debate that others might not. What is your unique perspective or expertise?



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Think tanks

These are organisations/groups focused directly on influencing policy. Often politically aligned (ideologically if not to a particular party) they include subject specialist as well as generalist organisations. Almost all regularly call for academic input to research and events.

Commercial events organisers There are a range of organisations in the business of organising policy events that offer opportunities for academics to speak at or attend.

Professional bodies Many of the highest profile policy events each year are put on by major business groups and professional bodies - including trade unions. They tend to have headline-grabbing contributions from Ministers in addition to sessions focused on particular issues that benefit from expert input.



Becoming part of the policy circuit

Top tips

Research the space

Look into the types of non-academic reports that are being published and events hosted in relation to your field of interest to spot where the interest in your work might be.

Reach out to researchers and events programmers

Once you have a sense of who is active in your area you can start reaching out to the people involved. A simple email of introduction will likely be very welcome from people whose job it is to source credible content and contributions.

Attend events, build relationships

You don't have to be on the stage to build your profile at policy events. The conversations you have with other delegates - many likely to influential figures on policy matters - can lead to useful relationships.

Ask questions

Asking smart, well-informed questions from the audience can bring you to the attention of those planning future events and the audiences you need to build you profile with.



When the opportunities come

Top tips

Be selective

It's great to be invited to speak at events but only take up the opportunities that you're comfortable with and will get value from. This means considering how much your expertise can be applied to the subject at hand, the type of audience you'll reach and the impact your contribution could achieve.

Understand the format and the audience

Find out as much as you can about any event you are invited to speak at in advance of doing so. For example, question whether it will be a panel session or a head to head debate, whether questions will be invited from the audience, and who that audience is likely to be made up of.

Appreciate your 'role'

In addition to the value of your expertise it is likely that you will have been invited because you offer a perspective that complements or contrasts with fellow speakers. For example, you may be offering objective analysis of an issue to sit alongside a politically partisan view, or that of a campaigner.

Prepare well

All of the principles of preparing for media interviews also apply for speaking opportunities. Make sure you know the points that you want to get across, have facts, figures and illustrative anecdotes ready to use and practiced techniques for handling any unhelpful questions.

What next?

Please take a moment to think about and tell us something in particular that has caught your attention today and one or two actions you are going to take to begin building your expert profile.