

Beyond The Ballot:

social science insights on eight key policy challenges



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Why did we write it? How can it help you?

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Head of Policy & Public Affairs

The social science disciplines include:

- anthropology
- architecture & planning
- business & management
- criminology
- development studies
- economics
- education
- human geography & environmental studies
- law
- politics & international studies
- psychology & behavioural sciences
- regional studies
- sociology, social work and social policy

Case study: Born in Bradford

Social science is making a difference to the health of communities

Born in Bradford is tracking the lives of over 40,000 people to help improve the health and wellbeing of the local community. Their evidence has led to interventions including improving urban green spaces, an early life intervention programme and establishing a clean air zone in Bradford.

“What we are able to show with our research in Born in Bradford is how you can use evidence to inform policy and inform change.”

– Professor Rosie McEachan



This is all about how we can improve the services within our city

Case study: City-REDI

Social science is making a difference to the economic resilience of the UK's regions

Research by City-REDI produced accurate projections of the effects of Brexit and COVID-19 on the UK economy. This directly informed the West Midlands region's socio-economic policy and led to the region receiving £1.5bn to accelerate planned infrastructure projects to inject extra money into the economy and create new jobs.



Making a difference... to the economic resilience of the UK's regions

“(This research) improved our understanding of the region’s distinctive exposure to different kinds of risks and therefore enabled a more effective response to the disruptive effects of Brexit and COVID-19.”

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, 2017-2024

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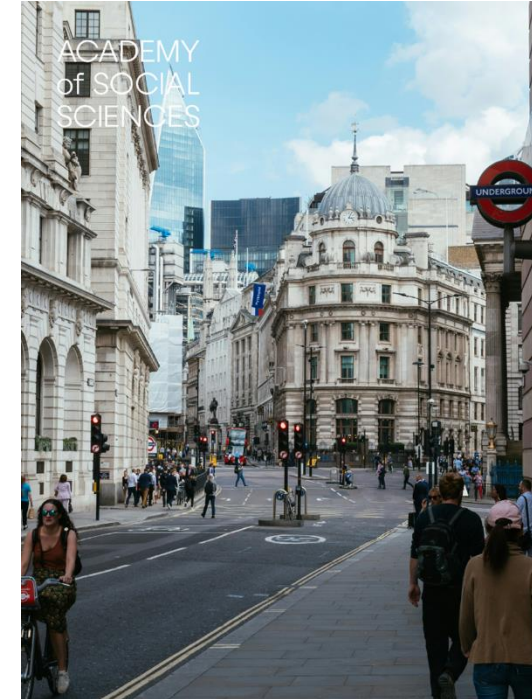
“This (a 50% uplift to funding in the region) is a result of the robust, evidence-based case which the WMCA put forward, with City-REDI analysis at its heart”

- Head of Economy & Local Industrial Strategy, WMCA.

Case study: Decision Maker Panel

Social science is making a difference to business policy

As part of the Bank of England's Decision Maker Panel, social scientists conduct a monthly survey of 9,500 senior business executives about current business conditions, expected future conditions and uncertainty. During COVID-19 this directly informed policy such as the furlough scheme and the easing of social restrictions. The Panel continues to provide monthly data and quarterly summaries used by the UK Government and the Bank of England.



Making a difference... to business policy

“The DMP has become an essential tool to the Bank of England and its Committees. The DMP [has] very quickly established itself as a core part of what we do not just on the monetary policy side of the Bank but [also] on the financial stability side.”

Andy Haldane, then Bank of England Chief Economist

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“Again and again the Committee has used the evidence provided by the DMP to guide its decisions. It is by far the most influential survey we use.”

- Monetary Policy Committee member

Case study: National Living Wage

Social science is making a difference to wage inequality

Social science research, in collaboration with the Low Pay Commission, on wage inequality and the gender pay gap directly informed the introduction of the National Living Wage in 2016, increasing the wages of over 1.5 million workers.



Making a difference... to wage inequality

Social science research directly influenced the introduction of the National Living Wage legislation in 2016, which was awarded to over 1.5 million workers aged 25 and over.

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“Already in 2019, the main adult minimum wage rate is estimated to have been 7% higher than if the NLW policy had not been introduced. This has a particularly big impact on women, who comprise 3 in 5 workers paid at (or below) the minimum wage.”

- Chief Executive Officer and Director of the Resolution Foundation, 22 July 2020.

Case study: CAST

Social science is making a difference by putting people at the heart of climate change action

Social science researchers have been instrumental in exploring and explaining how human behaviour might need to adapt to slow and respond to climate change.

The Centre for Climate Change & Social Transformations (CAST) has highlighted the importance of a people-centred approach to climate action, with their work helping to embed climate action within local government decision-making and contributing to the Skidmore Review of Net Zero.



Making a difference... by putting people at the heart of climate change action

CAST's work on the public's attitudes towards climate change, how this translates into action and how policymakers can increase support for and participation in sustainable policies was embedded within the Skidmore Review of Net Zero, which makes 129 recommendations for creating a green economy and meeting net zero by 2050.

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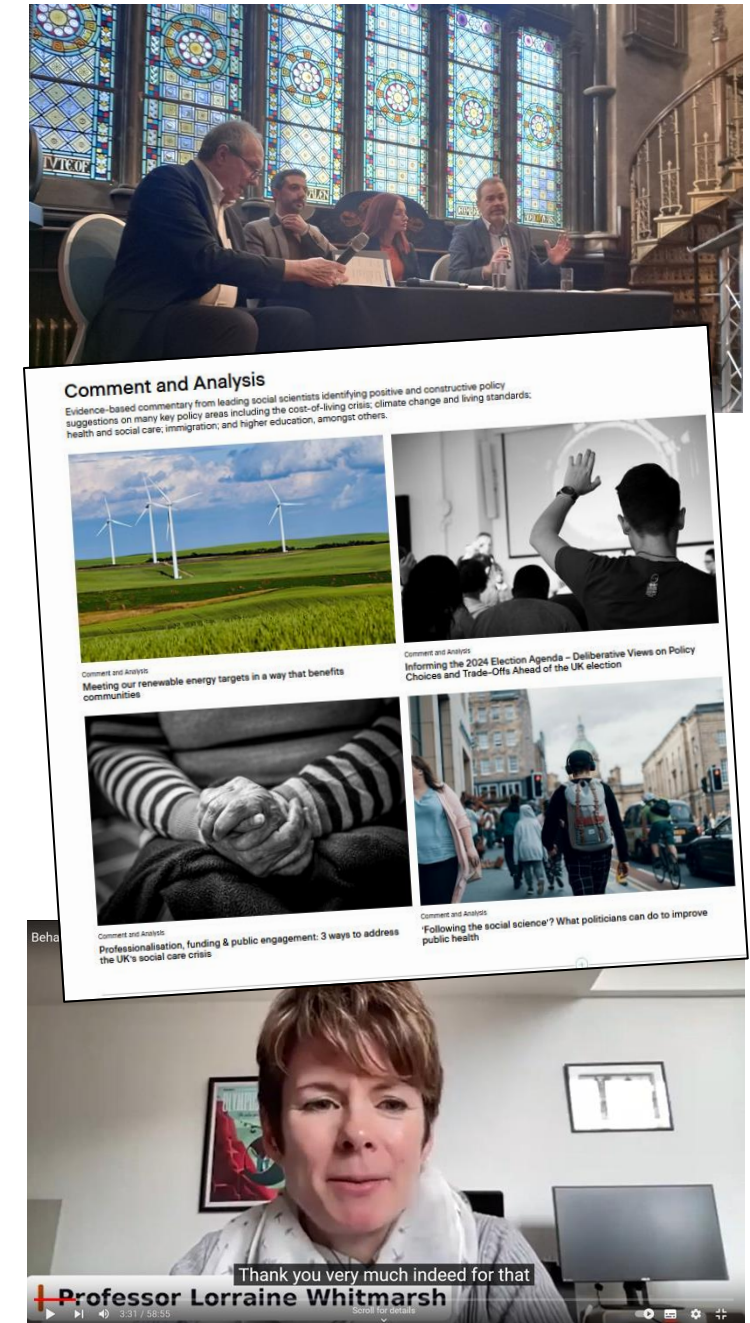
"We want to work closely with people and organisations to achieve positive low-carbon futures — transforming the way we live our lives, and reconfiguring organisations and cities."

— Professor Lorraine Whitmarsh

What did we do?

Over the course of the series, we...

- ...commissioned 43 articles from social science researchers and practitioners via our online hub.
- ...partnered with four organisations to host seven online webinars.
- ...worked with five institutional supporters of the Campaign for Social Science to hold seven in-person events in different cities across three nations of the UK.
- ...involved contributions from 34 of our Fellows from UK universities, among 114 contributing practitioner and academic experts.



Learning points

- 1) In setting cross-cutting missions, the UK Government will benefit from policymaking processes and infrastructures which incorporate a broad range of evidence in ways that are transparent and robust.
- 2) The new UK Government would benefit from a more joined-up approach to policymaking.
- 3) Greater attention to the evidence base underpinning controversial and contentious policy areas could lead to calmer and more reasoned deliberation.
- 4) There is still significant scope for policy innovation by drawing on successful practice from the devolved nations and regions.
- 5) Policy development and discourse should include adequate space and time for social and societal elements to be fully explored.



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**Reflections
and questions**