

POLICY AT THE BES

The BES is non-campaigning learned society. We utilise our members' expertise to develop recommendations for policy makers, based on the best available ecological evidence. We also seek to build the skills of our members so that they can engage with the science-policy interface independently. Alongside the internal BES Policy Team, the BES Policy Committee oversees the policy work of the BES.

BES Scottish Policy Group **@BES_ScotPol**
BES Wales Policy Group **@BES_WPG**

The Policy Committee is made up of members with a wide range of expertise and backgrounds, including those from universities, NGOs and government agencies. BES Policy Groups within the devolved nations are member-driven groups that specifically support greater involvement of ecologists in policy-making in the devolved nations.

OPPORTUNITIES AT THE BES

PARLIAMENTARY SHADOWING SCHEME

Gaining unique insight about the workings of government, the participants (post-PhD) spend two days shadowing a senior policymaker in one of the UK governments.

BES/DEFRA POLICY FELLOWSHIP

The Policy Fellow spends up to six months on a placement within a government department applying their scientific expertise to a practical policy challenge.

POLICY TRAINING

There is increasing awareness of environmental problems and the need for new policies to deal with these challenges. The BES holds policy training sessions that help our members to shape these policies and ensure they are rooted in the best ecological evidence.

POLICY INTERNSHIP

Based in the BES Policy Team, the Policy Intern (Graduate) works part-time alongside the BES Policy Team for 6 months.

POST (PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY) FELLOWSHIP

The POST fellow (2nd/3rd/4th year full-time PhD student or part-time equivalent) has three months to consult widely inside and outside of Parliament to produce a POSTnote (short briefing paper) on an emerging policy issue for MPs and peers.

INFORMAL NETWORKING EVENTS

The BES also runs informal policy-themed networking events, including 'Pie and a Pint' nights, where members get together with the wider environmental community to debate an emerging topic, followed by a pie and a pint!



 **@BritishEcolSoc**
 **@BESPolicy**

ECOLOGISTS AND POLICY

15% of species in Great Britain are threatened with extinction

(State of Nature, 2019)

To develop the right policies quickly, we need ecological evidence

It has never been more important for ecologists to engage in policy

BY ENGAGING WITH POLICY, YOU CAN...



Katherine Mullin asking a question on behalf of the BES to MPs in the Voice of the Future 2019.

DESIGN YOUR RESEARCH BETTER

Through knowing the type of evidence that is needed to support a policy, you can design your research (especially applied research) to make it more policy-relevant, increasing its impact.

MAKE YOUR RESEARCH TIMELY

By better understanding the external policy context, you can more easily identify policy-making windows and feed evidence into the process.

BETTER IDENTIFY RESEARCH EVIDENCE GAPS

Knowing which areas policymakers are working on will help you to identify policy relevant evidence gaps and any links with your research.

REALISE THE 'SO WHAT' FACTOR FROM YOUR RESEARCH FINDINGS

Engagement with policy through the BES can provide a transparent and documented avenue for promoting your research beyond academia and could be useful in developing REF case studies. If your research is relevant to a policy question, then your papers will be clearly cited in responses to consultations and inquiries coordinated by the BES policy team. We will also list contributors to BES responses to consultations and inquiries to provide evidence that you have initiated this pathway to impact for your research.

BECOME A MORE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR

Engaging with different audiences will help to improve your communication skills – be it writing better consultation responses, blogs, briefings or tweets.

GET NEW FUNDING

Influencing policy is one way of demonstrating impact, and can be helpful in securing funding for future research.

TO ENGAGE WITH POLICY, YOU CAN...

RESPOND TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS

Most new policies will be subject to a consultation, in which the government will be seeking evidence to inform their decision.

CONTRIBUTE TO SELECT COMMITTEES' CALLS FOR EVIDENCE

Select Committees conduct inquiries and produce reports on policy issues and the government's work. These reports will often cite influential submissions.

CONTRIBUTING TO POSTNOTES AND POSTBRIEFS

POST (Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology) provides in-house analyses of public policy issues relating to Science and Technology for policymakers, through publishing POSTnotes (4 page summaries) and POSTbriefs (longer reports) – overviews of scientific evidence and placing findings in policy context.

ATTEND ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS MEETINGS

These are cross-party groups of MPs alongside external stakeholders to discuss issues and new developments, and make recommendations.

IMPROVE DIALOGUE WITH POLICYMAKERS

Policymakers often have a different perspective on issues. For instance, inviting policymakers to events or writing to parliamentarians will allow increased awareness of different perspectives.

BUILD NETWORKS WITH CIVIL SERVANTS

Civil servants in government departments and agencies advise policymakers during the development and implementation of policies. It is often these 'officials' that develop the detail around policies and whom are most interested in evidence.

...AND IT CAN BE FUN!

The **BES** depends on the **expertise of its members** to develop policy positions, either pro-actively or in response to a government consultation or inquiry. You can contribute your expertise by:

- Drafting an answer to policy challenge relevant to your work
- Submitting evidence related to a policy challenge
- Reviewing the response drafted by the BES Policy Team

Contact the BES Policy Team to get involved
policy@britishecologicalsociety.org



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