How to write a PolicyBristol policy briefing or policy report

a) The policy briefing

A PolicyBristol policy briefing is a **two page, clear, concise document** which highlights the key policy messages arising from a piece of academic research or particular project. It is of primary importance that language used is **clear, non-technical, without acronyms** and is **accessible** to a non-specialist audience. Keep in mind that the reader should be able to grasp the key messages of the briefing on first reading, without needing to spend too long interpreting what is being said.
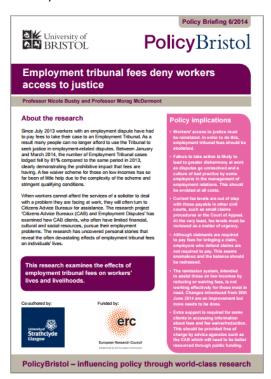
For consideration and discussion before writing a policy briefing or policy report

- What are your key messages?
- What is the 'hook'? Is there a topical event/public or policy debate onto which we can 'hook' the briefing, for maximising its relevance and interest to people?
- What outcome(s) are you hoping for?
- Who is/are your target audience(s)?
- What do you want them to do as a result of reading it?

Key components of the policy briefing

Page 1:

- *The title*: where the primary message of the briefing is clearly stated – this should be short and snappy.
- *Byline*: includes the author(s) name(s) and institution - must include at least 1 person from UoB
- *About the research*: this section summarises the research (approx. 150 words).
- *Policy implications:* this section draws out four or five key implications/recommendations for policy arising from the research (up to 180 words).

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Example: page 1

Page 2:

- *Key findings*: this section presents five or six findings from the research – these findings may well have led directly to the creation of the policy implications (up to 180 words).
- *Further information*: this section provides space for any relevant information, such as reference/links to related papers/reports/websites, or details of research partners, for example.
- *Contact the researchers*: names, job titles, organisations and email addresses of key researcher contacts.
- *Image*: the researchers and/or PolicyBristol select a topically-appropriate image for the briefing; attention must be paid to include photographer credit details if required.

Example: page 2

In addition

- You may wish to include one or two logos in the briefing, perhaps that of the project funder, or an organisation which has partnered in the research.

Process of creating a policy briefing or policy report

1) If you are interested to produce a policy briefing with PolicyBristol, you should approach us in the first instance (policy-bris@bristol.ac.uk) to talk through your aims in producing one, the proposed content, key messages you foresee, and any provisional ideas for dissemination and targeting.
2) You (and any co-authors) will produce a first draft of the content, closely following the guidelines provided in this document to minimise the amount of iterations required.

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3) PolicyBristol will do a first edit of the text provided and return it to you for further comment/edits.
4) You will return it to PolicyBristol with your comments/edits and we will collectively iterate until all parties are satisfied with the finished copy.
5) You will provide an image if you have access to one (if not, PolicyBristol will identify one) and any logos needed within the briefing.
6) PolicyBristol will put the content into the InDesign template and share with you for sign off.
7) If you would like assistance with targeting and dissemination of the policy briefing, PolicyBristol will build a dissemination plan based on your stated aims and then disseminate; we can also arrange for a print run of your briefing.
8) The briefing will also be added to the PolicyBristol website and promoted via social media.

Previous examples

You may wish to look over some previous policy briefings to give you a sense of what we are aiming for. You can find them on the Influencing policy page of the PolicyBristol website. The following two briefings are particularly good examples which led to effective engagement with policy makers and other relevant stakeholders:

A directly elected mayor can enhance visible city leadership

Employment tribunal fees deny workers access to justice

b) The policy report

A PolicyBristol policy report is a **four-page document** which provides more **flexibility** than the two-page policy briefings: these reports can be a **more substantive outlet** for evidence summaries, short reports, summaries of larger research projects etc., as opposed to the policy briefings which must be very concise and clearly focused on policy messages and 'calls for action'. As is the case with the policy briefing, the policy report should be **accessibly written**, with no jargon/acronyms; language must be accessible to a non-specialist audience.

The sections of these reports are likely to vary to a degree depending on each academic's content requirements.

For consideration and discussion before writing a policy report

See the second item on page 1 of this document - the considerations and discussions required before writing a policy report are the same as those required before a policy briefing.

Key components of the policy report

Page 1:

- *The title*: where the primary message of the briefing is clearly stated – this should be short and snappy.
- *Byline*: includes the author(s) name(s) and institution - must include at least 1 person from UoB.
- *About the research*: this section provides a summary of the research and the context (approx. 250 words).

Pages 2 and 3:

This is where the flexibility lies and the template can be adapted to suit your particular needs (there is space for up to 500 words on each of these pages).

Some example sections/content you may want to consider include:

- Research findings

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- Case studies
- Quotations from research participants
- Visual imagery/graphs/maps etc.

<u>Page 4:</u>

- *Policy implications:* this section on the back page provides the opportunity, in the context of the content of the previous 3 pages, to pull out a series of implications for policy/calls for action; these can be in bullet point form and may be preceded by a sentence or two of context (approx. 200 words).
- *Further information*: this section is for related information e.g. links to a related paper/report/website; information about research partners; elaboration around particularly complex information within the report (of which there shouldn't be much!)
- *Contact the researchers*: names, job titles, organisations and email addresses of key researcher contacts.

<u>General points to note:</u>

- We will use 'pull-out boxes' throughout to highlight particularly pertinent quotations or statements so please keep in mind as you write which statements are key for you.
- We need 3 or 4 high resolution images to use through the document – please ensure we have the rights to use the images you select, which may require crediting the photographer. If you are unable to provide images we can help to source some.
- Please provide any logos you may need to include e.g. that of funders / research partners.

Process of creating a policy report
See the item on page 2 of this document – the same process applies to creating a policy report as a policy briefing.

Previous examples
You may wish to look over some previous policy reports to give you a sense of what we are aiming for. You can find them on the Influencing policy page of the PolicyBristol website. Two examples:

Employment tribunal claims: debunking the myths

Mayoral governance in Bristol: An initial assessment of impacts

If you would like to discuss creating a policy briefing or policy report please get in touch: policy-bris@bristol.ac.uk

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