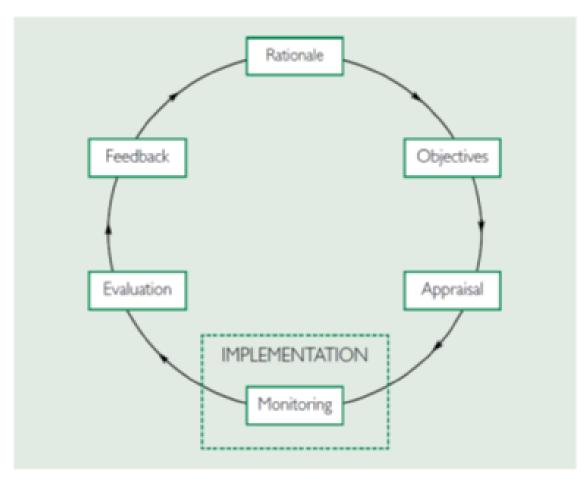
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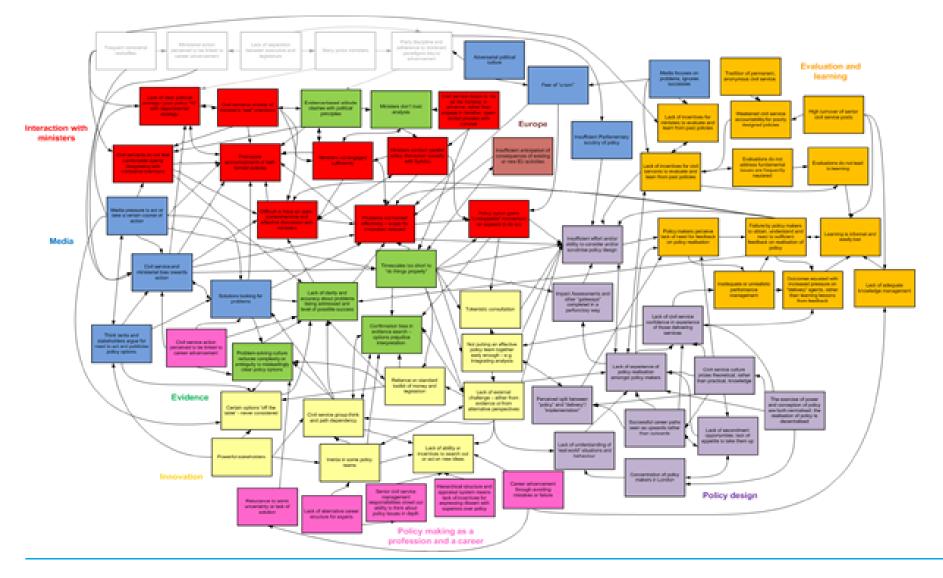
Evidence and policy making



The standard model is of an idealised "cycle"



The "real world" of policy making COVERNMENT looks more like this



Why isn't policy based purely on evidence?



- The constraints of policy makers
- The culture of academia
- Institutional barriers

We've looked at where policy ideas come from

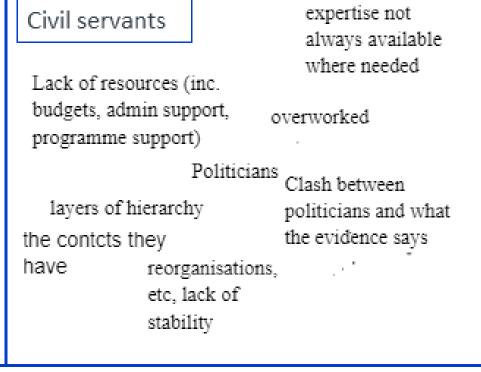
- Manifestos
- Think tanks
- Media
- Constituents
- Pressure groups
- Business lobbies
- International obligations
- Commissioned research
- Independent academic research
- Civil servants

But policy makers work under many constraints

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Politicians	election cycle pressures
Intelligence	satisfying voters
other politicians	Party politics
Public opinion	
civil servan	ts Lack of subject expertise
Expertise/knowledge	

- time to understand



Both	th Funding time	Beliefs about spending ie Austerity Complex academic	Environmental	Oversees affairs
time			ego	
	language of thter evidence	shor	t on time	

Policy makers work under many constraints



Politicians

Political constraints

- Fit government narrative
- Voter impact
- Priority
- Speed of results (electoral cycle)

Personal power

- Personal clout
- Ability to persuade colleagues/PM backing

Parliamentary constraints

- Securing space in the legislative programme
- Parliamentary arithmetic

Civil servants

Resource pressures

- Knowledge
- Capability and capacity
- Implementation

Both

Time

Budget

External events

Which sometimes leads to this...

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An event occurs. Minister and special advisors consider how to respond on the way to a function so that an announcement can be made



Civil servants asked to "work up some options" by the end of the week



Research completed. This consists of:

- Google
- Finding out if anyone remembers what was done last time (they don't)
- Calling an expert known to the department
- Team brainstorming session



Policy leaked to press and widely derided. Policy abandoned.



Minister selects an option and asks for brief to be written so that an announcement can be made in 2 days' time



Submission made to minister outlining options and recommending a course of action

Why isn't policy based purely on evidence?

- The constraints of policy makers
- The culture of academia
- Institutional barriers

How do the cultures of academia and government differ?

Go	vernment			Academia	
			Different	priorities ,focus	
technical language -	accountable (sort of)	<<< evidence necesarilly em quickly enoug	erge	Long reports	Can be a narrow focus
acronyms etc. Fast-paced	Complicated structures	difference >>	Emphasising nuance and perspective		s required for rch with participants
	parties to consiHaverto	make do with		reflective	
Unsteady/ Some bodies can rely constantly multidisciplinary tear changing e.g., knowledge and library services to rap generate evidence	listen what the political ns rather the optimal	ere is (budgets, l constraints) nan generating	technical language - conceptual, theoretical etc	Possibly more experimental?	
summaries		archaic go structures	only want to evidence is	speak after published	

How do the cultures of academia and government differ?

Area	Government	Academia
Aim	Policy output	Knowledge creation
Career incentives	Breadth of experience	Depth of specialism
Timescales	Short-term, responsive	Long-term, funding-driven
Mode of communication	Memo, briefing, report	Journal article, monograph
Style	Simplify, persuade	Explain, contextualise, caveat
Conclusions	Concrete recommendations	"More research is needed"

Why isn't policy based purely on evidence?



- The constraints of policy makers
- The culture of academia
- Institutional barriers

Institutional barriers to use of evidence



- Lack of shared networks between academics and policy makers
 - High staff turnover
 - Generalist model means lack of deep expertise and contacts
- Poor institutional memory
- Unclear responsibility for how evidence is used and accessed

The problem with institutional memory (in three quotes)

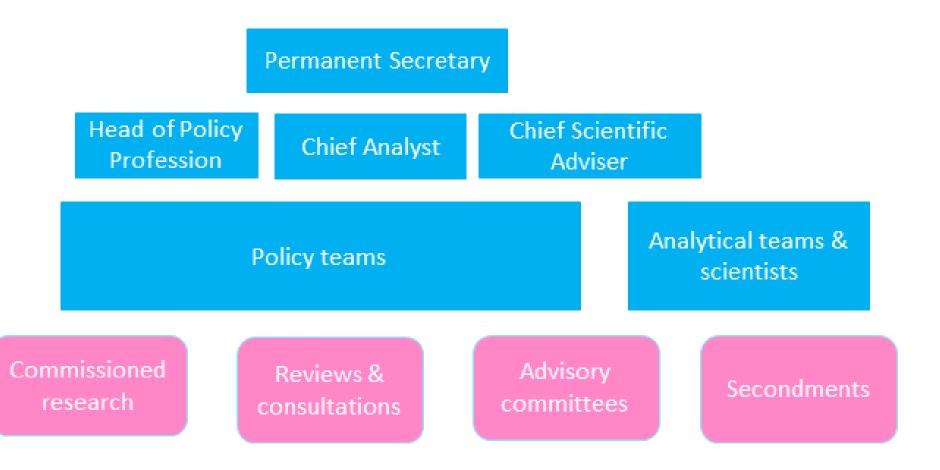


The move from paper to digital has "undermined the rigour of information management across much of government" – **Allen Review**

Most of the information accumulated in the past 15 to 20 years is "poorly organised, scattered across different systems and almost impossible to search effectively" – Cabinet Office

"There's always something going on about knowledge and information management but they don't have the most effect. [W]e're just all very busy, and the amount of my time that I can spend thinking about the file structure on a shared drive is quite minimal." – IfG interview

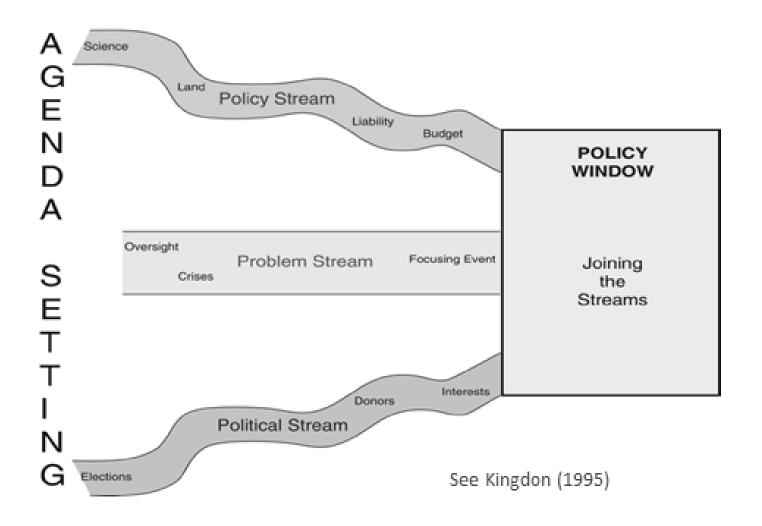
Responsibility for how evidence sow is accessed and used is often unclear



So...how can research influence policy?

Multiple streams framework



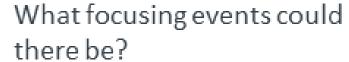


Problem stream

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Is there a "problem" which people believe requires attention?











Political stream

What is the political context?

- Who are the relevant politicians? Their political fortunes matter
- What are the dominant narratives?
- What could motivate politicians to turn ideas into policy?

Policy stream

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Who influences policy in your area of interest?

- Are there recognised experts or public figures who could promote your ideas?
- Are there special interest groups and think tanks?
- Do you have links into populations and communities affected by policies?







Maximising influence

Problem stream	 Is there a problem which people believe requires attention? What focusing events could there be?
Political stream	 Who are the relevant politicians? What are the dominant narratives? What could motivate politicians to turn ideas into policy?
Policy stream	 Who influences policy in your area of interest? Are there recognised experts or public figures Are there special interest groups and think tanks? Do you have links into populations and communities affected by policies?

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Practical Examples of Engagement



Brief for influencing skills session



Imagine you are meeting a policy maker or influencer at an event. As you queue for coffee, they ask you about your work. How do you reply?

Aim for a 2 minute explanation that is suitable for someone from a non-academic background. Try and interest them in your work and show why it's important and/or interesting!

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Thank you

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