



Alliance news for the New Year, future directions for scientific advice, blogs on social media, RCTs and why academics and journalists should like each other more.

Follow us on Twitter @A4UEvidence

Events

[Broadening the evidence base: science and social science in social policy](#)

Tuesday 8th January 2013, London. This lunchtime seminar was part of the 'Future directions for scientific advice in Whitehall' series. We have produced a [video](#) of the event, which was chaired by Paul Boyle, CEO, ESRC, with contributions from speakers including Chris Wormald, Permanent Secretary DfE, Paul Wiles, former Home Office CSA, Geoff Mulgan, CEO, Nesta and Rebecca Endean, CSA MoJ

Upcoming events in the Future Directions series

- [Credibility across cultures: the international politics of scientific advice](#) 6th & 7th February 2013, Sussex. This event, which will be hosted by the STEPS centre, will look at international lessons with relevance for scientific advice in the UK.
- [Future directions for scientific advice in Whitehall](#) 18th April 2013, London CSaP annual conference 2013. Continuing the theme of the [Future Directions seminar series](#), key speakers include Sir Bob Kerslake, Head of the Home Civil Service, and Sir Mark Walport, incoming Government Chief Scientific Adviser. Please note there is a fee for attending this conference, we are providing ten free places to Alliance members on a first come first served basis. Please contact the Alliance if you wish to reserve a place (alliance.4usefulevidence@nesta.org.uk)

Alliance publications and guest blogs

[Is social media dodgy evidence or the future?](#)

Social media has the richest, largest and most dynamic evidence base for human behaviour. But policy makers must take heed of serious potential questions of ethics and robustness according to Jamie Bartlett, Director of the Centre for the Analysis of Social Media at Demos.

[How evidence can help the UK's economic growth](#)

Professor Jonathan Shepherd, Director of Cardiff University Violence research group, writes on how increasing public and third sector investment in crime and justice and education research will increase economic growth.

[Tea, Guinness and TB: the origins of the Randomised Control Trial](#)

There are many myths and misunderstandings surrounding randomized trials, an increasing part of international development and social policy. Surprisingly, the best cuppa may have inspired the creation of RCTs, according to historian Rhodri Hayward at Queen Mary, University of London.

[The Truth, the Whole Truth...](#)

Caroline Fiennes, director of Giving Evidence, discusses what social policy and practice can learn from looking at what *doesn't* work.

[Why journalists and academics should like each other more](#)

Both vocations have a lot to gain from engaging with each other - and plenty to lose from not. Sue Littlemore, freelance education journalist and former BBC Education Correspondent, offers her views on how and why the gap between the two should be bridged.

News from our Funders and other partners

[Project Oracle Evidence Competition](#)

Funded by the Mayor's Office for London and the ESRC, Project Oracle aims to 'understand and share what really works' in youth programmes in London. The Competition is open to all organisations working with young people within London, there is also a category for projects nationwide. The competition aims to champion organisations that reflect on the effectiveness of their projects demonstrating their potential impact and sharing it with others. The winners will receive prizes of up to £5000, and access to evaluation support from Project Oracle. The deadline for submissions is **31st January 2013**, more details can be found on the hyperlink above.

[Online workshop from The Coalition for Evidence-Based policy](#)

The Coalition, a US based nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, which seeks to increase government effectiveness through the use of rigorous evidence about what works, have recently released an open online workshop 'How to Read Research Findings to Distinguish Evidence-Based Programs from Everything Else'. The video series workshop aims to teach core skills that are need to be an effective practitioner of evidence based policy. You can find the workshop video on the hyperlink above.

ESRC

[Administrative Data Taskforce \(ADT\) Improving Access for Research and Policy report launched](#)

Formed in December 2011 by the ESRC, the Medical Research Council (MRC) and Wellcome Trust, and chaired by Sir Alan Langlands, the ADT has been working with a range of organisations to examine the best procedures and mechanisms to make administrative data available for research safely. The Taskforce propose a UK Administrative Data Research Network that would be responsible for linking data between government departments. The full report, 'Improving Access for Research and Policy' from the ADT was published in December 2012, and can be downloaded from the [ESRC website](#)

[Celebrating Impact Prize](#)

The ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize is a new, annual opportunity to recognise and reward the successes of ESRC-funded researchers who have achieved, or are currently achieving, outstanding economic and/or societal impacts. If you are ESRC funded and think you have made an **Outstanding Impact in Public Policy** you can nominate yourself, the deadline for applications is 14th February 2013.

The Big Lottery Fund

[Realising Ambition](#)

This UK Wide programme from the Big Lottery Fund is investing £25million in replicating 25 diverse evidenced based projects that have a track record in improving outcomes for children and young people, and will reach in excess of 150,000 children and young people over its 5 year duration. One of the key aims of the programme, which is being led by Catch 22, is to raise awareness among stakeholders and funders of the effectiveness of evidence based interventions provided by voluntary sector organisations to key stakeholders and to funders.

The approach being used is both innovative and experimental, hence sharing learning from this programme and its evaluations of impact and process is fundamental to its success. It aims to contribute to the evidence base of what works in reducing offending, and also how to effectively reproduce an intervention. For further details on the programme and to join the Realising Ambition Learning Network email distribution list please email realisingambition@catch-22.org.uk