

THE FORUM

Engaging with All-Party Parliamentary Groups

All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) are informal cross-party groups that have no official status within Parliament but are critical to building networks with relevant people interested in your research topic. They are run by and for Members of the Commons and Lords, though many choose to involve individuals and organisations from outside Parliament in their administration and activities.

Many APPGs cover either a subject, for example aerospace, medical research or digital currencies, or a country of common interest. MPs and peers of any party can join. APPG members meet regularly to discuss the particular issue of concern. APPGs can be very receptive to contacts with outside bodies and individuals, and can provide a forum for well-informed discussion and analysis.

How to engage

You can find the APPG most closely aligned with your research [on the register online](#). Each APPG has their own page on which you will find the secretariat contact and upcoming meetings and topics. Get in touch with the secretariat to find out more about what the group is interested in, how your research can contribute and how you can get involved. Meetings are public so anybody can attend and it is a good idea to go along to get a sense of how the group works and meet some members informally. The monthly [Forum internal bulletin](#) will also include all relevant upcoming APPG meetings.

Tools for engaging with an APPG

It is helpful to translate your research into an accessible and tailored format for readers, who may not be experts in your field of research. Policy-makers are inundated with information from a variety of sources. To ensure they take notice of your research, you need to present it to them in a format that is accessible and useful.

Policy briefing

A short briefing note that summarises your research and the policies of actions you want to recommend is a good starting point.

- Always target a specific group: make your communications directly relevant to the members of the APPG by referring to its discussions. Policy-makers receive hundreds of letters and briefings every week so you must grab their attention quickly. Say within the first paragraph of your cover email that you are writing to them because you know of their interest in the subject and how your research impacts on this policy area.
- Think about what the key messages are that you want policy-makers to take away from your findings and use to shape policy. Write these up in a compelling way and make sure you adapt them to the needs of the APPG members. Include a clear ask on what you would like them to do with your findings, for example changing an existing policy or developing a new one. You can also ask for involvement in an event or request a meeting.
- Remember that you are communicating with laypeople so be careful not to present your findings in a style that is too academic and inaccessible. Write succinctly and to the point in your first contact. You can then follow up with more detail and a personal discussion later.

Attending APPG meetings

APPG meetings are free and available to attend for everyone – you may have to register in advance though.

- Check with the secretariat beforehand, this is also a good opportunity to build a relationship with them.
- They will also coordinate the speakers for each meeting so more longer term, you could think about whether it would be useful for you to speak on your research findings.
- When attending meetings, be proactive and always look for new opportunities to make contacts.
- Keep up to date with the latest policy developments and re-initiate conversations to maintain relationships. **The Forum internal bulletin** can help you keep abreast of opportunities and developments.

Let us know how you get on and if we can help

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