



UNIVERSITY OF
BATH

2024

2025

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

August 2024–July 2025

IPR Institute for
Policy Research

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Executive summary

Key highlights 2024–2025

The Institute for Policy Research (IPR) is a leading public policy research institute, based at the University of Bath. We aim to advance the public good with innovative research into major policy challenges and deliver activities that connect researchers with policymakers and practitioners. Through our teaching, events and publications, we promote public understanding and democratic debate on public policy.

Research



We had a successful year for income generation, returning over £4.5 million in research income for the year.



We were awarded funding from organisations including the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, abrdn Financial Fairness Trust, Bath Beacons, the Korean Government, the Nuffield Foundation and private philanthropy.



Our research is highly cited, with around 25 per cent of our publications appearing in the top ten per cent cited worldwide.

Postgraduate teaching

100

100 mid-career policy professionals have been recruited onto our Doctorate in Policy Research and Practice (DPRP) course.



Over 30 students are currently enrolled on the MSc in Public Policy course.

Policy programmes

43



43 fellows took part in our Policy Fellowship Programme, involving 122 meetings with 88 Bath academics and professional service staff.

We delivered two Masterclasses for the Policy Profession Unit.

We led the University of Bath delegation to COP 29, where we presented *ActNowFilm: Youth Climate Leaders as Agents of Change*.

Events and communications



We ran 11 events, with a total audience of around 1,250 people.

We shared new podcasts and videos, engaging another 15,800 people.

We published 85 blog posts and received 24,100 blog views.

The IPR had a really strong year in 2024–25 across the range of our research activities, knowledge exchange, events and publications. We secured significant funding from the Research England Development Fund to establish the Brunel Centre, a new economic data and research resource for the West of England, in partnership with colleagues at UWE Bristol and the business community in Futures West. This is now a major new centre for regional policymaking, led by Dr Lucy Martin. Watch this space.

Professor Nick Pearce, IPR Director

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IPR structure



IPR team

- Professor Nick Pearce, IPR Director
- Professor Peter Allen, IPR Co-Director
- Dr Geoff Bates, Lecturer and Deputy Director of Studies for the Doctorate in Policy Research and Practice
- Dr Joe Chrisp, Research Associate
- Professor James Copestake, Director of Studies for the Doctorate in Policy Research and Practice
- Professor Matt Dickson, Professor of Economic and Social Policy
- Dr Aída García-Lázaro, Research Associate
- Dr Rita Griffiths, Research Fellow
- Dr David Klemperer, Research Assistant
- Ashley Lait, Head of Policy Programmes and Communications
- Dr Charles Larkin, Director of Research
- Dr Johanna Meyer, Policy Engagement Manager
- Professor Jane Millar, Emeritus Professor of Social Policy
- Dr Alice Morrey, Blog Editor
- Amy O’Beirne, Events, Publications and Communications Officer
- Dr Andrea Serna Castaño, Research Associate
- Claudia Torres Cervantes, IPR Coordinator
- Dr María José Ventura Alfaro, Research Associate
- Dr Marsha Wood, Research Assistant



IPR Advisory Board

We are very grateful to our board members for their continued contributions throughout 2024–2025.

- Lord John Eatwell (Chair), former President, Queen’s College, University of Cambridge
- Marcial Boo, former Chief Executive, Equality and Human Rights Commission; founding chair of the UK’s Institute of Regulation; CEO of the Insolvency Practitioners Association
- Anita Charlesworth, Director of Research and the REAL Centre (Research and Economic Analysis for the Long term) at the Health Foundation
- Dr Claire Craig, Honorary Fellow and former Provost, The Queen’s College, University of Oxford
- Van DuBose, former investment banker and consultant
- Sarah Hunter, Trustee, Nesta
- Gail Kent, former Director of HR, Resources, Data within DGs HR and CONNECT, European Commission; trustee, executive coach / mentor
- Jessica Lee, Director of Strategy, West of England Combined Authority
- Alison Raw, Adviser and Head, Public Health and Disaster Resilience, Office of the Secretary-General, The Commonwealth Secretariat
- Ryan Shorthouse, Director, Bright Blue
- Lord Christopher Tugendhat, former Chancellor of the University of Bath and former EU Commissioner



IPR visitors

IPR Honorary Professors

- Professor Ricardo García Mira, Full Professor of Social Psychology, University of A Coruña, Spain; former member of the Spanish Parliament
- Professor Sue Maguire, expert and independent consultant on education, employment and social policy
- Professor Allister McGregor, former Professor of Political Economy, Department of Politics, University of Sheffield; former Head of the Vulnerability and Poverty Team, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex

Professor of Practice

- Professor Chris Skidmore OBE, former MP for Kingswood; former Minister of State, including at the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy; Chair of the Independent Government Review on Net Zero

IPR Visiting Fellows

- Fran Bennett, Associate Fellow, Department of Social Policy and Intervention, University of Oxford; independent consultant
- Jurgen De Wispelaere, Visiting Professor, Götz Werner Chair of Economic Policy and Constitutional Theory, University of Freiburg, Germany
- Professor Santosh Mehrotra, Research Fellow, IZA Institute of Labour Economics
- Steve Webb, Partner, Lane Clark & Peacock; former Pensions Minister and MP

IPR Visiting Policy Fellows

- Dr Jorge Sainz, Associate Professor, Applied Economics and Moral Philosophy Department, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos

Affiliated academics and researchers

- Dr Hannah Durrant, Senior Research Fellow, Wales Centre for Public Policy; former Research Strategy Lead at the IPR
- Dr Luke Martinelli, former IPR Research Associate and lead researcher on Universal Basic Income

The IPR has continued to engage with senior policymakers who are seeking to tackle increasingly complex societal problems. Our Policy Fellowship Programme has connected them with Bath researchers and helped to provide the basis for meaningful and lasting relationships.

Professor Peter Allen, IPR Co-Director

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IPR research



IPR research overview

The IPR continues to excel as a source of original, high-quality and impactful research. Across a wide variety of domains, we have a direct effect on the creation of evidence-based policy.

We have maintained a consistent track record of publishing research and delivering policy impact, while being competitive for external funding.

The IPR is frequently invited to contribute to funding applications, and we continue to play a significant role in different research proposals and projects, including the development of the new Brunel Centre.

The Brunel Centre

The Brunel Centre is a new economic data, research and knowledge exchange hub for the West of England. Directed by Dr Lucy Martin, it is a partnership between the University of Bath (led through the IPR), UWE Bristol and Futures West. The Centre received £4.5 million funding from Research England to support its first five years, matched by the universities and with a commitment to secure external revenues to reach a total budget of £8.7 million.

The Brunel Centre's mission is to deliver innovative data, research and knowledge exchange to inform sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the West of England and to maximise the opportunities of devolution for the region. The Centre's work will have four strands:

- A publicly accessible, online data hub and observatory on the economic performance of the West of England
- Methodologically innovative economic research and knowledge generation, using newly available microdata from the Integrated Data Service, qualitative research with regional businesses and other sources
- Stakeholder-funded projects and consultancy
- Events, workshops and knowledge exchange activity, building capacity for regional policymaking, advocacy and strategy development

Professor Matt Dickson, Dr Joe Chrisp and Dr Aída García-Lázaro are among the researchers working with The Brunel Centre.

We have strong relationships with other research institutes, faculties and departments at the University, including the Institute of the Augmented Human; the Institute for Mathematical Innovation (IMI); IAAPS (the Institute for Advanced Automotive Propulsion Systems); Accountable Responsible and Transparent AI (ART-AI); the Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations (CAST); the Centre for Sustainable and Circular Technologies (CSCT); and committees on Research Impact and Culture.

The IPR's research streams include:

- UBILab@IPR
- Education, welfare and work
- Sustainable futures and healthy living
- Political economy and politics



UBILab@IPR

Working with colleagues in the Department for Social and Policy Sciences, we research Universal Basic Income (UBI) from a range of disciplinary perspectives.

We undertake microsimulations and macroeconomic modelling of UBI proposals, study UBI pilots and experiments, research the political economy of UBI, and exchange knowledge with policymakers and civil society advocates for UBI.



The economics of basic income

Dr Chrisp, who leads our work on basic income, published a paper exploring the politics of basic income in the *Policy Studies Journal*. His co-authored paper with colleagues from Northumbria University was accepted for publication in *Poverty and Public Policy*. This paper, 'What do people want from a welfare system? Conjoint survey evidence from UK adults', presents experimental survey evidence on attitudes to tax and welfare.

Dr Chrisp's ongoing research examines the steps towards implementing a minimum income guarantee / basic income in the UK. Findings from this project will be submitted for journal publication. He is co-editing a book on methods for understanding public opinion on basic income, to which he is also contributing two chapters.

As part of his engagement with UBldata – a global Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN) initiative designed to curate and disseminate findings from basic income experiments worldwide – Dr Chrisp is developing a paper that synthesises evidence from UBI experiments.

Dr Chrisp presented his research on basic income experiments at the BIEN Congress in Bath in August 2024.



Education, welfare and work

We research the reform of education, welfare and work with a particular focus on the political economy, and its tools, methods and explanatory frameworks.

We are concerned with the ways in which post-financial crisis government policies, labour market changes and socio-technological developments produce new social risks and vulnerabilities. We explore the range of political, public policy and social responses to these challenges and the options for better securing social justice.

Our research on widening participation in higher education helps to improve understanding of the factors that promote participation from a broader range of students, and the policies and practices that enhance wider successful participation in higher education. We are concerned with ensuring that all students with the talent and desire to attend university can do so and go on to achieve their full potential in education and beyond.

Working with the University of Bath Made Smarter Innovation: Centre for People-Led Digitalisation and its successor project, Made Smarter Innovation: Centre for People-Led Net Zero, we also explore people-led policy solutions to enable the manufacturing sector to improve UK productivity.

Research projects include:

- Addressing risks of graduate un/under-employment in the COVID-19 labour market
- Employment and earning returns to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees
- Explaining ‘unexplained’ grade inflation in the UK’s universities
- From the centre to the periphery: Evaluating the Opportunity Areas programme
- Further Education colleges and the ‘levelling up’ agenda
- Revisiting the raising of the participation age to 18 in England
- Risky business: Understanding intergenerational persistence in entrepreneurship
- Work placements / study abroad opportunities: Barriers to participation for underrepresented groups
- Navigating monthly assessment in Universal Credit
- People-Led Digitalisation / People-Led Net Zero



Addressing risks of graduate un/under-employment in the COVID-19 labour market

This project, with Professor Matt Dickson, Dr Predrag Lažetić, Professor Michael Donnelly and Dr Kalyan Kameshwara, estimated the impact of early graduate underemployment on the chances of attaining a graduate job later on in the early career. It also explored how the effect differed for different groups of graduates. We highlighted the importance of the initial transition to the labour market, particularly for graduates from widening participation backgrounds, and developed policy proposals to address this national challenge. The findings have been published as a working paper and submitted to the journal *Economics of Education Review*.



Employment and earning returns to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees

Professor Matt Dickson continues his part-time secondment at the Department for Education (DfE), allowing access to 'in-house' DfE data that are not otherwise available to academic researchers. This is facilitating a new project continuing work on the scarring effects of early graduate underemployment, exploiting data connecting the Longitudinal Education Outcomes data (LEO) with the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE).



Explaining 'unexplained' grade inflation in the UK's universities

Professor Matt Dickson is Co-Investigator for this project, working alongside Principal Investigator Robertas Zubrickas (Economics), additional Co-Investigator Judith Delaney (both Department of Economics) and postdoctoral research assistant Maria Pia Iocco Barias (IPR).

Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the project aims to understand the drivers of grade inflation in UK higher education over recent decades and will empirically test competing hypotheses for the increase in the proportion of students gaining an upper second-class or first-class degree.

Building on the initial analysis undertaken using data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency, the researchers have run further analysis using the LEO dataset. The most recent analysis was presented at the third 'Higher Education in a Cold Climate' conference at the University of Bristol in July 2025. The conference was attended by leading academics working on higher education in the UK, along with policymakers and think-tank researchers.



From the centre to the periphery: Evaluating the Opportunity Areas programme

This project, which received £1.4 million over three years from the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) trial accelerator fund, commenced in July 2024. The formal launch event in December 2024 brought

together academics, policymakers and local stakeholders, including key personnel from the DfE's Disadvantage Strategy Unit (partners on the project) and representatives from 12 local authorities that were recipients of the Opportunity Areas funding.

The project uses a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the impact of the Opportunity Areas policy, a £108 million area-based intervention that aimed to close the substantial gaps that exist in education and skills between regions in the UK. The evaluation will compare the educational attainments – including in higher education – and labour market outcomes of young people in the Opportunity Areas to those of comparable individuals in areas with similar social and economic challenges but not in receipt of additional funding through the programme. Complementing this quantitative analysis of the policy's impact will be qualitative research strands aiming to understand the mechanisms through which the additional funding translated into impact.



Further Education colleges and the 'levelling up' agenda

This UKRI Policy Support Fund project, which includes Professor Matt Dickson and Dr Predrag Lažetić as Co-Investigators, seeks to understand the value of Further Education qualifications and their role in 'levelling up' regions of the UK. Findings from the project were published in a special issue of the journal *Contemporary Social Science* in October 2024.



Revisiting the raising of the participation age to 18 in England

This project, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, provides a comprehensive evaluation of the policy of raising of the education and training participation age to 18 (RPA) in England, which was implemented in stages from 2012. Professor Matt Dickson leads the project as Principal Investigator, with IPR Honorary Professor Sue Maguire, Dr Andrea Laczik and Olly Newton (Edge Foundation) and Dave Thomson (FFT Education Datalab) as Co-Investigators, and Dana Dabbous (Edge Foundation) and Dr María José Ventura Alfaro (IPR) as project researchers.

In March 2025, Professor Dickson and Professor Maguire presented the findings from both the quantitative data analysis and the qualitative case study at a Nuffield Foundation event ('Improving meaningful participation in post-16 education and training: UK insights') to a select group of invited policymakers and related stakeholders. Gavin Kelly, a member of the Department for Work and Pensions' Labour Market Advisory Board, chaired the session and the Minister of State for Skills, Baroness Smith, responded to the researchers' presentation.

In April 2025, the project team held a policy co-creation event in Birmingham with around 25 of the stakeholders who had been involved in the research, either as one of the key policy architects interviewed early in the project, or a stakeholder from one of the case study areas.

Presentation of the findings continued throughout 2025, with Professor Dickson giving talks at a University of Bath and University of Exeter joint research workshop (April) and at research seminars at University College London and Durham University (May). In June, Professor Dickson presented the research to local authority skills leaders at a seminar of the Business Board Network and at the International Workshop on Applied Economics of Education in Catanzaro, Italy.

Professor Dickson presented a paper on the quantitative findings at the Social Policy Association annual conference in York in July 2025, and Dr María José Ventura Alfaro presented a paper on the qualitative case study findings at the same conference.

The project report and accompanying policy brief were launched at event in London in July 2025, which was attended by representatives from the local authorities involved the research, as well as policymakers from DfE and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Subsequent to the launch event, Professor Dickson and Professor Maguire were invited to present the findings to a group of policymakers – from DfE, DWP, HM Treasury and the Downing Street Policy Unit – at a special workshop considering challenges in education and youth employment and the possible policy responses.



Risky business: Understanding intergenerational persistence in entrepreneurship

This ESRC-funded project, for which Professor Matt Dickson is Co-Investigator, continues to examine the relationship between the entrepreneurship choices of parents and their children.

The first paper, using the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents And Children (ALSPAC) cohort dataset, was presented at several conferences in summer 2025, including the Babson College Entrepreneurship Research Conference in Boston, USA (June), the DRUID Conference in Toronto (July) and the Academy of Management Annual Conference in Copenhagen (July).

The project will next explore the mechanisms driving this persistence of entrepreneurship over generations and will look at broader definitions of entrepreneurial proclivity.



Work placements/study abroad opportunities: Barriers to participation for underrepresented groups

Professor Matt Dickson leads this project, which is funded by the University of Bath Teaching Development Fund. The project aims to understand the barriers to participation that students from underrepresented groups face when considering a work placement or study abroad opportunity as part of their course at the University of Bath. This project has included focus groups with students who did or did not undertake a placement or study abroad year, as well as a survey administered to current and past undergraduate students at the University. A second quantitative strand of analysis, examining the impact of placements on final year degree attainment among the University's students, is also part of the project.

The evidence-based recommendations generated through this research will support the development of targeted strategies to reduce barriers, such as financial constraints and incorrect perceptions of placement costs and benefits. Findings were presented at the University's EduFest 2025 event in June 2025. Findings and recommendations were also shared with the University's Employability Forum, along with Placement Managers, the Director

of Employability and Student Success, Admissions and Recruitment, WP and Outreach, the Advancement Office, the University's Progress Group and Student Experience Board and the Office of the Vice Chancellor.



Navigating monthly assessment in Universal Credit

Dr Rita Griffiths and Dr Marsha Wood lead our work on Universal Credit (UC), funded by abrdn Financial Fairness Trust. Following their 2022/23 project exploring how UC's system of monthly assessment affects income security and financial wellbeing in working households, Dr Griffiths and Dr Wood have completed three additional reports based on qualitative research with working claimants on UC.

Cliff edges and precipitous inclines: The interaction between Universal Credit, passported benefits and means-tested help

This research examined the interaction between Universal Credit and additional means-tested help for working claimants. The report and policy brief were published in September 2024 and received significant media coverage. The report was cited in a House of Commons debate led by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Liz Kendal.

A big, vast, grey area: Exploring the lived experiences of childcare for parents on Universal Credit

The report and accompanying policy brief for this research were published in February 2025, again receiving coverage in the media. Dr Griffiths, Dr Wood and Professor Nick Pearce were invited to discuss the findings and recommendations in detail with the DWP in March 2025.

Going it alone: The experiences of self-employed Universal Credit claimants

Dr Griffiths and Dr Wood presented the findings and recommendations from this research to DWP researchers, analysts and policy advisers at the end of June 2025. The report and accompanying policy brief were published in July 2025.

Universal Credit and Council Tax Reduction

Dr Griffiths and Dr Wood's current research project explores how working UC claimants experience Council Tax Reduction (CTR) schemes in England. The research is being conducted in partnership with Entitledto, who have integrated a survey link into their online benefit calculator. The survey, developed by IPR Policy Engagement Intern Olly Connolly, is designed to be completed by UC claimants with recent experience of CTR, and will be used to select individuals for follow-up interviews. In addition, Dr Griffiths and Dr Wood will conduct interviews with stakeholders from local authorities and organisations specialising in welfare rights and debt counselling. Findings from the study will be published later in 2025, with the aim of informing the UK government's review of Universal Credit.

Expert contribution

Throughout 2024–2025, Dr Griffiths and Dr Wood have contributed to several DWP-organised meetings and webinars. Their participation has supported the UK government's review of Universal Credit, in particular on discussions on financial and work incentives in UC and the impact of fluctuating incomes.

In September and October 2024, they were keynote speakers at the Child Poverty Action Group's annual Welfare Rights Conference, also attended by Sir Stephen Timms, Minister for Social Security and Disability.

In January 2025, Dr Griffiths participated in a policy roundtable event in Leeds, hosted by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). This event explored reforms to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and the health-related elements of UC for disabled people and people with health conditions.

In May 2025, Dr Griffiths was a featured speaker at an event co-hosted by the University of Bristol and DWP, which focused on Areas of Research Interest (ARIs). It was attended by around 60 DWP staff and academics.

In addition, Dr Griffiths and Dr Wood have submitted written evidence to the government's consultation on the development of a new Child Poverty Strategy.



People-Led Digitalisation / People-Led Net Zero

The People-Led Digitalisation (PLD) project reached completion in 2025 and was succeeded by the People-Led Net Zero project, for which the IPR will provide labour market and skills gap analysis. Dr Aída García-Lázaro, the IPR's main researcher for the PLD project, remains affiliated with the People-Led Net Zero project.

In September 2024, Dr García-Lázaro presented research undertaken for the PLD project to the Annual Money and Finance Conference in Manchester. This work on machine learning and informal markets was undertaken in collaboration with Professor Chris Martin and Dr Magdalyn Okolo (Department of Economics). In addition, Dr García-Lázaro presented research to the Bessemer Symposium on the Economic Geography of Innovation, Sheffield. In October 2024, she presented to the Macroeconomics Network in the South West/Bath-Bristol Workshop on 'AI, cybersecurity and cloud computing skills in the UK labour market' (work with Dr Charles Larkin) and, in November, to the West of England Combined Authority 'lunch and learn' seminar on productivity and innovation.

In April 2025, Dr García-Lázaro presented a research paper, 'UK labour market concentration and AI skills', to the Bath and Exeter Applied Economics Workshop, hosted by the Department for Economics at the University of Bath. The paper is currently being revised for journal submission.

In collaboration with Dr José Muñiz, a new paper examining the relationship between AI skills and firm value in the United States is under development. Dr Muñiz, Dr García-Lázaro and Dr Larkin have also submitted a paper, 'Artificial Intelligence, human capital, job postings, firm value', to the journal *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*. This paper examines AI job demand and the market performance of S&P 500 companies.

Two additional papers are in development: one examining AI skills and inequality in the UK, for a special issue of *Regional Studies*, and one on AI skills, complementarity and substitutability, in collaboration with the School of Management.

In addition to these publications, Dr García-Lázaro completed an IPR report, 'Revisiting productivity and innovation in the West of England: An analysis based on microdata', co-written with Dr Chris Dimos (School of Management) and Charlie Carter (Department of Economics), and a PLD case study on digital skills.



Sustainable futures and healthy living

Using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework, we seek to bring together scientists, engineers and social scientists to research and develop solutions for the interconnected economic, social, environmental and health challenges we face in the UK and globally.

Research projects include:

- Tackling root causes upstream of unhealthy urban development (TRUUD)
- Local health and global profits
- Compliance of food safety regulations by the meat sector in England



Tackling the root causes upstream of unhealthy urban development (TRUUD)

Dr Geoff Bates has led a sub-team to develop a tool to support the inclusion of health impacts within funding and policy decision-making processes and appraisal activities. The team has worked with officials

from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to adapt this tool – Health Appraisal for Urban Systems (HAUS) – for use in the MHCLG department. The TRUUD team has been developing user guidance and a methods guide to accompany the tool and has been engaging with the Department of Health and Social Care and senior officials across departments for further feedback on the tool and its intended use.

In June 2025, TRUUD and MHCLG co-hosted an event in Westminster to discuss HAUS, the implementation of HAUS across the system, the promotion of systems thinking, and empowering mayors on health. Dr Bates participated in a panel discussion entitled, 'Healthier urban environments: Where are the opportunity spaces for changing the system?'

The TRUUD team has also engaged with the HM Treasury (HMT), the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Department for the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to explore opportunities for further collaboration.

Dr Bates is currently concluding his work on the systems evaluation of the TRUUD programme, reviewing all data from the interventions implemented across TRUUD to understand their reinforcing and cumulative impact on how health is prioritised in urban development.

As part of this, Dr Bates led three impact events in Edinburgh (with Public Health Scotland and the Scottish Futures Trust), Cardiff (with Public Health Wales) and Birmingham (with the West Midlands Combined Authority). These events brought together public, private and third sector stakeholders across policy areas of planning, transport, health and housing. Attendees engaged with the evidence from the evaluation work and participated in activities to help the research team understand the impacts of the work on the urban development system, as well as discussing future action to maximise the benefits of the work.



Local health and global profits

Dr Geoff Bates, Dr Andrea Serna Castaño and Professor Nick Pearce are involved in this research project, which is investigating how the commercial sector influences public health at the local level and the interventions that can be implemented in response. The project is one of four funded by the Population Health Improvement UK (PHI-UK) network, which was established by UKRI.

Dr Bates has been working to design knowledge exchange and impact strategies for the project, mapping stakeholders and researching how to effectively communicate research findings and evidence on the topic to different groups. He leads work on maximising the impact of the project at local and national government levels, and has been working with project colleagues and partners in the Association of Directors of Public Health and public health advocacy groups.

Dr Serna Castaño presented a paper, 'Building a synthetic population to assess the health impacts of local climate change policies in England', at the Health Studies User Conference 2025 and the Summer 2025 Health Economists Study Group (HESG), hosted by the Office of Health Economics (OHE) in Brighton.



Compliance of food safety regulations by the meat sector in England

In December 2024, Dr Andrea Serna Castaño concluded her work with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) on this project, which aimed to apply behavioural science to food safety policy to maximise food business compliance. This was a joint project with the University of Bath Department of Economics and Department of Psychology.

Findings from the project were presented to the FSA's Director of Operations, Chief Scientific Adviser and Director of Information of Science, as well as to the Countryside and Community Research Institute and to the European Health Economics Association at a conference in Vienna. A paper from the project, 'Systemic literature review of quantitative studies on business compliance in developed countries', was submitted to the *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* journal.

This work allowed the IPR to develop expertise in the Hospital Episodes Statistics (HES) as part of an ongoing collaboration with Professor Eleonora Fichera in the Department of Economics at the University of Bath.



Political economy and politics

We are interested in political economy and the evolution of politics, the changing role of the state and the political ideas and values that define contemporary political parties, political identities and public policies. Working with colleagues across the University, we study political parties, public policy and policymaking.

Research projects include:

- *World Island*
- Comparative politics
- Finance and public policy



World Island

Professor Nick Pearce (IPR) is co-authoring a book with Professor Michael Kenny (University of Cambridge). *World Island*, due to be published in late 2025 by Polity Press, will explore ideologies of Britain's role in the world.



Comparative politics

Dr Joe Chrisp produced a paper for the journal *Renewal*, exploring the role of age/generation in the 2024 general election. Further political economy papers address age polarisation across advanced democracies over the long term and the evolution of attitudes to benefit conditionality in Europe from the 1980s to the present.



Finance and public policy

Dr José Muñiz, Dr Aída García-Lázaro, Dr Charles Larkin and Professor Shaen Corbet (Dublin City University) are developing several papers. One paper on AI and the labour market will explore the implications of hiring people to satisfy the AI demand in the market, and the impact that the proportion of AI-specialised employees has on firm valuation. Additional papers, including a letters paper, examine the relationship and interactions between common volatility indexes, cryptocurrencies and oil markets. A paper under review studies the impact of voluntary environmental, social and governance (ESG) reporting on firm equity market performance before and after the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change.

Dr Larkin continues to work on the economics of cryptocurrencies, as well as public policy work related to the economics of transport with IAAPS, with a paper published in *Transport Policy*.

Dr Larkin continues to sit on the advisory board of the European University Association (EUA) Financially Sustainable Universities project. In June 2025, he delivered a seminar on Central Securities Depositories Regulation (CSDR) reporting and universities for the EUA. Dr Larkin continues to research higher education management and policy research for Purdue University.

Our analysis of the raising of the participation age to 18 uncovered how the policy, as implemented, differs markedly from what was originally envisaged, and helps to explain why its impact has been limited.

Professor Matt Dickson, Professor of Economic and Social Policy, IPR



International collaborations

We continue to collaborate internationally through our research. These collaborations will be enhanced further over the coming year.

Professor Nick Pearce, Professor Matt Dickson and Dr Charles Larkin (IPR) remain visiting Research Associates at Trinity Business School, Trinity College Dublin. Dr Larkin has maintained research and teaching collaborations with the Krieger School of Arts and Science and the new Bloomberg School of Public Policy at Johns Hopkins University, Dublin City University and the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

We continue to collaborate with Yonsei University, South Korea, on research relating to welfare, pensions and the future of work.

Our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Republic of South Korea's Ministry of Employment and Labour (MOEL) promotes knowledge exchange and collaboration between the institutions, enabling ministry staff to spend up to one year at the University of Bath focusing on a research project that aligns with the IPR's portfolio. A similar MOU is in place with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA).

We welcomed three Visiting Policy Fellows from the Republic of South Korea in 2024–2025: Jongho Kim (Director of the Youth Employment Planning Division at Ministry of Employment and Labor), Taegyeong Kim (Deputy Director of the Social Services Policy Division, Ministry of Health and Welfare) and Youngmin Lee (Deputy Director, Financial Services Commission).

We also strengthened our research connections in Finland, welcoming Professor Heikki Hiilamo as a new Visiting Fellow. Professor Hiilamo is Professor of Social Policy at the University of Helsinki and Research Professor at the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, where he researches the economy of wellbeing, poverty, inequality, welfare and tobacco control.

We continue our research with Professor Armando Sanchez-Vargas, Director of the Institute of Economic Research, the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Dr Jorge Méndez-Astudillo, also of the Institute of Economic Research, has worked with Dr Aída García-Lázaro on the performance of labour markets with respect to digital skills with a particular focus on the nuclear power industry.



Commissions



Future of higher education

Professor Nick Pearce was among the expert panel of commissioners brought together by Universities UK to outline the role that universities can play in driving opportunities and economic growth. The final report was published in October 2024. Across eight chapters, it sets out steps for the government and policymakers on topics including the impact of the UK's higher education and research; generating growth for employers and local communities; the UK's international competitiveness; and the future of the higher education sector. Professor Pearce led the chapter on social mobility and creating opportunity for learners in England, for which Professor Matt Dickson was an advisory group member.



Living Wage Commission

In June 2025, Professor Pearce was appointed as the new Chair of the Living Wage Commission. The Commission was established in January 2016 and draws from leading Living Wage accredited employers, trade unions, civil society and independent experts. It oversees the calculation of the real Living Wage rates, providing a transparent decision-making forum to resolve specific judgments about how to incorporate policy changes and new sources of data into the calculation. It also advises on how to manage extreme year-to-year variations from general rises in living costs.



Pensions Commission

In July 2025, Professor Pearce was appointed to the Pensions Commission. Alongside Professor Pearce, the Pension Commission comprises Baroness Jeannie Drake and Sir Ian Cheshire. They will explore the complex barriers stopping people from saving enough for retirement, examining the pension system and considering what is required to build a future-proof pensions system. The Commission will work closely with stakeholders such as the Confederation of British Industry and the Trades Union Congress, and will deliver a final report in 2027.



Publications

We use SciVal to evaluate the performance of our research publications. SciVal is a research performance assessment tool which analyses data from Scopus, the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature.

Key highlights for 2024–2025 are as follows:

- Our Field-Weighted Citation Impact Score was 2.33 (the global average is 1.0)
- 24 per cent of our publications appear in the top ten per cent cited worldwide
- 40 per cent of our publications appear in the top ten per cent of journals worldwide
- 45 per cent of our publications are published with international collaborators

Our 2021-2024 publications on stock market volatility (COVID-19), cryptocurrencies, steroids and performance enhancing drugs, UK austerity and welfare, the connection between health and the built environment, education and adult health, electric vehicle life cycle assessment, China and emission trading schemes appear in the top one per cent of publications globally.

Published journal articles and books (2024–2025)

Research theme	Publication
UBILab@IPR 	Nettle, D, Chrisp, J, Johnson, E and Johnson, MT (Forthcoming). What do British people want from a welfare system? Conjoint survey evidence on generosity, conditionality, funding, and outcomes. <i>Poverty and Public Policy</i> .
	De Wispelaere, J, Doussard, M and Chrisp, J (2025). Basic income trials and the politics of scale: A research agenda. <i>Policy Studies Journal</i> .
	Chrisp, J (2024). Book review: Laenen, T. The popularity of basic income: Evidence from the polls. <i>International Social Security Review</i> , 77(1-2), pp. 137-138.
	Crisp, J, Pearce, N and Richiardi, M (2024). UBI-eh? Strengthening minimum income guarantees, universality and unconditionality in the UK working-age welfare state. <i>CeMPA Working Paper Series</i> .
	De Wispelaere, J, Chrisp, J and Morales, L (2024). Basic income in crisis? (Hard) lessons from the pandemic. <i>Global Policy</i> .
Education, welfare and work 	García-Lázaro, A, Kanabar, R and Webb, S (2025). Pensioner spending patterns in retirement: Implications for decumulation strategies.
	García-Lázaro, A, Méndez-Astudillo, J, Lattanzio, S, Larkin, C and Newnes, L (2025). The digital skill premium: Evidence from job vacancy data. <i>Economics Letters</i> , 250, 112294.
	Branicki, LJ, Brammer, S, Brosnan, M, García-Lázaro, A, Lattanzio, S and Newnes, L (2024). Factors shaping the employment outcomes of neurodivergent and neurotypical people: Exploring the role of flexible and homeworking practices. <i>Human Resource Management</i> , 63(6), 1001-1023.
	García-Lázaro, A, Méndez-Astudillo, J, Lattanzio, S, Larkin, C and Newnes, L (2024). Digital skill premium in the UK energy sector.
	García-Lázaro, A and Larkin, C (2024). Artificial Intelligence (AI) skills in the UK labour market.
	Griffiths, R (2024). Universal credit and automated decision making: A case of the digital tail wagging the policy dog? <i>Social Policy and Society</i> .
	Griffiths, R (2024). The gendered effects of joint assessment for couples claiming means-tested benefits. In: Bennett, F, Avram, S and Austen, S (eds). <i>A research agenda for financial resources within the household</i> .
	Wood, M, (2024). Falling between the cracks: The experiences of young parents on Universal Credit. <i>Journal of Youth Studies</i> , 27(7), 1042-1057.
	Adamecz, A, Dickson, M and Shure, N (Forthcoming). The labour market returns to graduation: Reconciling administrative and survey data estimates. <i>Economics of Education Review</i> .
	Dickson, M, Donnelly, M, Kameshwara, K and Lažetić, P (Forthcoming). The scarring effect of graduate underemployment: Evidence from the UK. <i>Economics of Education Review</i> .
	Teggi, D, Dixon, J and Dickson, M (2025). Demographic, health, and social predictors of place of death in England, 2004-2013: Identifying barriers to dying in the community. <i>Journal of Aging and Social Policy</i> , 1-24.
	Donnelly, M, Davies, J, Dickson, M, Courtois, A and Lažetić, P (2024). Education and the spatial division of labour: Further education and prospects for 'levelling up'. <i>Contemporary Social Science</i> , 19(4), 514-530.
	Dickson, M, Skinner, T and Forrester-Jones, R (2024). The dynamic effects of becoming disabled on work, wages and wellbeing in the UK from 1991 to 2018. <i>Journal of Social Policy</i> , 1-26.
	Bowman, S, Morris, TT, Dickson, M, Rice, F, Howe, LD and Hughes, AM (2024). Maternal depressive symptoms and young people's higher education participation and choice of university: Evidence from a longitudinal cohort study. <i>Journal of Affective Disorders</i> , 344, 339-346.
Dickson, M, Donnelly, M, Kameshwara, K and Lažetić, P (2024). The scarring effect of graduate underemployment: Evidence from the UK. <i>IZA Discussion Paper</i> .	
Davies, J, Donnelly, M, Dickson, M, Brown, C, Pearce, N, Siddiqui, N and Harris, R (2024). Evaluating the Opportunity Areas programme: Learning from stakeholders at our project launch.	
Adamecz, A, Dickson, M and Shure, N (2024). The labour market returns to graduation: Reconciling administrative and survey data estimates. <i>IZA Discussion Paper</i> .	

Research theme	Publication
<p>Sustainable futures and healthy living</p> 	<p>Barnfield, A and Bates, G (2025). Coding with a transdisciplinary team: A project exploring unhealthy urban development. <i>Area</i>, e12998.</p> <hr/> <p>Bates, G, Hasan, MN, Barnfield, A and Bondy, K (2025). Urban policies and the creation of healthy urban environments: A review of government housing and transport policy documents in the United Kingdom. <i>Journal of Urban Affairs</i>, 47(6), 1942-1960.</p> <hr/> <p>Black, D, Bates, G, Gibson, A, Pain, K, Rosenberg, G and White, J (2025). What is 'good' co-production in the context of planetary health research and how is it enabled? <i>Earth System Governance</i>, 23, 100229.</p> <hr/> <p>Ayres, S, Newman, J, Sandford, M, Barnfield, A and Bates, G (2025). How democratically elected mayors can achieve mission-oriented policies in turbulent times. <i>Regional Studies</i>, 1-14.</p> <hr/> <p>Ayres, S, Newman, J, Bates, G, Gouais, A Le, McClatchey, R and Pearce, N (2024). Are we any closer to tackling health inequalities in England? <i>Contemporary Social Science</i>, 1-24.</p> <hr/> <p>Richardson, A, Tjønndal, A, Demetrovics, Z and Bates, G (2024). Issues and threats to the integrity of esports. <i>Performance Enhancement and Health</i>, 100297.</p> <hr/> <p>Newman, J, McClatchey, R, Bates, G and Ayres, SA (2024). Tackling health inequalities: The missing delivery mechanisms in national health missions. <i>IPPR Progressive Review</i>, 31(1), 63-69.</p> <hr/> <p>Black, D, Bates, G, Callway, R, Pain, K and Kirton-Darling, E (2024). Short-termism in urban development: The commercial determinants of planetary health. <i>Earth System Governance</i>, 22, 100220.</p> <hr/> <p>Bates, G, Barnfield, A, Pearce, N and Ayres, S (2024). Why didn't the 'critical juncture' of the COVID-19 pandemic lead to the re-integration of public health into urban development policy in England? <i>Cities and Health</i>, 1-13.</p>
<p>Political economy and politics</p> 	<p>Pearce, N and Kelly, G (2025). The recent history and future prospects of the UK welfare state. <i>Oxford Review of Economic Policy</i>, 41(1), 28-40.</p> <hr/> <p>Pearce, N (2024). Constructing Disraeli in twentieth-century conservatism. <i>The English Historical Review</i>, 139(600), 1199-1229.</p> <hr/> <p>Pearce, N (2024). Opportunity, partnership and growth: A blueprint for change from the UK's universities.</p> <hr/> <p>Pearce, N (2024). Nothing works, but plenty to do. <i>Political Quarterly</i>, 95(2).</p> <hr/> <p>Hochman, R, Larkin, C and Corbet, S (2025). A survey of Universal Basic Income experiments. <i>Basic Income Studies</i>, 19(2), 201-225.</p> <hr/> <p>Muñoz, JA, Larkin, C and Corbet, S (2025). Understanding the use of unconventional monetary policy for portfolio decarbonisation in Europe. <i>Journal of International Money and Finance</i>, 150, 103231.</p> <hr/> <p>McCluskey, J, Druitt, T and Larkin, C (2025). Sustainability in transit: Assessing the economic case for electric bus adoption in the UK. <i>Transport Policy</i>, 162, 493-508.</p> <hr/> <p>Conlon, T, Corbet, S, Hou, YG, Hu, Y, Larkin, C and Oxley, L (2024). Understanding sentiment shifts in central bank digital currencies. <i>Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Finance</i>, 44, 100988.</p> <hr/> <p>Cioroianu, I, Corbet, S, Hou, YG, Hu, Y, Larkin, C and Taffler, R (2024). Exploring the use of emotional sentiment to understanding market response to unexpected corporate pivots. <i>Research in International Business and Finance</i>, 70, 102304.</p> <hr/> <p>Cioroianu, I, Conlon, T, Corbet, S, Larkin, C, Oxley, L and Taffler, R (2024). The influence of social media emotions: Evidence from the Kodak manic episode. <i>Journal of Behavioral Finance</i>, 1-28.</p> <hr/> <p>Morgan, D and Larkin, C (2024). How can AI be used to target market manipulation? An overview of techniques and systems that can be used to ID market manipulation. <i>Themes in Alternative Investments</i>, 1, 101</p> <hr/> <p>Corbet, S and Larkin, C (2024). Themes in alternative investments: An introduction. <i>Themes in Alternative Investments</i>, 1, 1.</p>

The IPR continues to excel as a source of original, high-quality and impactful research. The IPR aspires to be a model in higher education for the interface between researchers, policymakers and civil society, facilitating an evidence-informed policy ecosystem.

Dr Charles Larkin, IPR Director of Research



**IPR postgraduate
teaching and
internships**



Teaching

We offer postgraduate courses and doctoral supervision through our Doctorate in Policy Research and Practice (DPRP) and our joint MSc in Public Policy. We also supervise full-time doctoral students, and supervise jointly with the Department of Chemistry, the DBA in Higher Education Management and through the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Centre for Doctoral Training in Accountable, Responsible and Transparent AI (ART-AI) and IAAPS (the Institute for Advanced Automotive Propulsion Systems).

Doctorate in Policy Research and Practice

One hundred mid-career policy professionals from 30 countries have been recruited onto our Doctorate in Policy Research and Practice (DPRP). Of these, 17 have now completed their doctorates, with another 14 having exited after the taught stage of the programme with a postgraduate certificate, diploma or master's qualification. Twelve more students will begin in September 2025 as the 11th cohort.

Doctoral graduates from the programme during the last year include:

- Javed Ahmed: Reforming government or managing the status quo? Policy actors shaping institutional reform of Punjab's education system
- Baljit Banga: The impact of public procurement rules on women's refugees in the UK
- Caroline Fazli: Repairing the metabolic rift? Knowledge, values and visions of development in the agroecology movement in Rayalaseema, India
- Gemma Grimes: Climate policy and renewable energy: Conservative Party explanations for policy change and policy dismantling 2010–2020
- Laura Hilger: Mapping policy design process: Public policymaking in the UK
- Rabia Nusrat: Negotiating the status quo: Lived realities of the urban middle class in Pakistan

- Valentina Sommacal: Engaging the agribusiness in making food systems more just: The case of the horticulture sector in the Foggia Province of Italy
- Stephan Zimmerman: Investment in sovereign disaster risk financing strategies: The experience of small island states, 2010–2019

MSc in Public Policy

Thirty-one students are enrolled on our MSc in Public Policy course, a programme designed for working professionals. Current students are employed by organisations including government departments, local authorities, international bodies and universities. These range from UK-based institutions such as the Home Office, Civil Service and local councils, to global organisations such as the ASEAN Secretariat, UNICEF and the Prime Ministry of Jordan. Students also work in sectors such as social care, urban planning, defence, education and consultancy, covering public, private and third sector organisations.

IPR PhD students

We continue to develop and foster PhD candidates from many departments across the University. Current PhD candidates that are (co-)supervised by IPR researchers include:

- Rachel Ambler: The impact of early childhood development on social mobility in the UK
- Adam Coates: Using cognitive diagnostic modelling with national and international assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses of mathematics learning in England
- Seren Essex: Do subject requirements of degree courses impose unfair or inappropriate constraints on who can apply, and impair efforts to widen access to higher education?
- Joe Goodier: Interpretable diagnostic imaging using generative priors
- Nadim Hamdan: The impact of COVID-19 on ethnic disparities in the British labour market
- Tasha Marino: Decarbonising the UK industrial sectors through Green Hydrogen, its storage and floating offshore wind: Lessons from the literature

- Jac McCluskey: A green bond for the finance of low-carbon bus operations
- Deborah Morgan: The role of anticipatory regulatory instruments within the regulation of AI systems
- Patrick Prince: The identification of a breakthrough entrepreneurial opportunity that is pursued in a cross-industry alliance entrepreneurship
- Geors Richards: Articulating volunteerism, wellbeing and sustainability in the context of green social prescribing
- Damien Ziubroniewicz: Fair machine learning

In 2025, José Antonio Muñiz completed his PhD: Essays in finance: Social responsible investment and its policy implications.



IPR internships

Our internship programme allows students and early career researchers to enhance their research and professional skills. IPR interns in 2024–2025 included:

- José Antonio Muñiz Martinez, School of Management, University of Bath
- Valeria Ortega Berzunza, International Tax Consultant, Symbiotics
- Nichole Schantz, Climate Ambassador Southwest Hub Manager, The Met Office
- Nadine Shannon, Research Assistant, Trinity College Dublin
- Olly Connolly, BSc Politics and International Relations, University of Bath

5

**IPR policy
programmes**



IPR policy programmes

Our policy engagement activities align with core areas of the University's research strengths and our own expertise, as well as the needs of local, national and international decision-makers.

Our Policy Fellowship Programme continues to grow in strength and reach. We have increased the number and range of policy fellows participating in the programme and have engaged with a wider portfolio of academics from across the University.

Our work has further developed meaningful policy-academic links and relationships across multiple government departments, local organisations and institutions. These connections have broadened our policy networks and our ability to engage senior policymakers with our policy-relevant research, enabling future opportunities for relevant policy support and contributions to research bids.

Through national and international policy networks, we are well connected to the UK university and policy sector, and we have strengthened our international climate links. This work has enhanced the reputations of the IPR and the University of Bath, and has enabled opportunities for future collaboration.



The IPR Policy Fellowship Programme (PFP)

The IPR Policy Fellowship Programme gives senior policymakers and decision-makers from government and the third sector the opportunity to connect and engage with leading academics from across the University of Bath. Through a bespoke programme of meetings, they are able to explore the policy questions and challenges they are looking to address in their professional role.

In addition to our flagship programme, through which policymakers can apply to connect with academics across topics, we host policymakers through the following specialist streams:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy Fellowship Programme
- Health Policy Fellowship Programme
- Net Zero Policy Fellowship Programme
- Affiliate agreement with the University of Cambridge Centre for Science and Policy (CSaP)

During the academic year 2024–2025, we welcomed 43 Policy Fellows to Bath (a 22 per cent increase on the previous academic year), hosting 122 meetings with 88 academics and professional service staff.

Of these, 42 per cent participated in the Net Zero stream, 35 per cent in the Health stream, 28 per cent in the general stream and seven per cent in the AI stream. We hosted ten fellows through our CSaP affiliate programme.

The majority of fellows (88 per cent) came from UK government departments and affiliated agencies.

We successfully engaged policymakers from the Department for Business and Trade (DBT), the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), the Department for Transport (DfT), HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) and Ofgem. We also hosted policymakers from, among other organisations, Bath and North East Somerset Council, the Department for Transport (Ireland), NHS England and the NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board.

Policy Fellowship Programme impacts

Following his participation in our AI Policy Fellowship Programme, James Boyd-Wallis (Appraise Network) published a report detailing the results of his meetings. With a foreword from Lord Tim Clement-Jones, Co-Chair of the All-Parliamentary Party Group on AI, the report featured contributions from five University of Bath academics: Dr Tom

Haines, Professor Özgür Şimşek, Dr Rob Branston, Professor Emma Carmel and Professor Rachid Hourizi.

Following James Peacock's (DEFRA) participation in the programme, Dr Andrew Barnes invited James to sit on the advisory board of an Impact Acceleration project working to implement and trial new CCTV software, 'AI on the river'.

Two fellows have participated in repeat visits. Further repeat visits of teams and individual fellows will take place in the next academic year, speaking to the programme's appeal with policymakers.

Several follow-up meetings between fellows and academics have taken place. In addition, Policy Fellows from DESNZ are looking to invite members of the Department of Psychology to speak at internal events.



The Bath Policy Engagement Academy

The Bath Policy Engagement Academy (BPEA) was launched as a pilot in September 2023. It is funded by Research England's Policy Support Fund and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)'s Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) schemes. It is supported by a pan-University strategic advisory group. Due to its ongoing success, funding for the BPEA has been secured until September 2026.

The BPEA aims to:

- Unify and enhance policy engagement training and activities across the University
- Expand the University's policy engagement impact regionally, nationally and internationally

- Support successful external policy fellowship applications and research bids
- Provide a clear entry point for senior policymakers to access the University's expertise

To date, we have delivered:

- A BPEA website, launched in March 2024
- Online policy engagement guides, case studies and resources
- Presentations to University of Bath departments, centres, teams and individuals
- Seven selective, cohort policy engagement training sessions for 31 early career researchers from across all faculties
- One-to-one policy impact coaching for 23 academics, including research bid support
- Support for 32 academics applying to external policy fellowship programmes, including fellowships with the ESRC, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), Royal Society, Understanding Society and the Foundation for Science and Technology
- Four Masterclasses with the Policy Profession Unit

Policy engagement coaching highlights

Testing vapes in schools for Spice

Following extensive media coverage of a University of Bath news story on the prevalence of Spice in vapes used by children in English secondary schools, local Bath MP Wera Hobhouse engaged with Professor Chris Pudney (Department of Life Sciences) to discuss his research and potential parliamentary action.

As a result, Wera Hobhouse MP has tabled a business question in Parliament, led a 30-minute adjournment debate on the issue, raised concerns with ministers from the Department for Education in the House of Commons and written to the Secretary of State for Education.

We worked closely with the University's Head of Public Affairs to aid further engagement on this issue, and supported a briefing session with the Department for Health. Professor Pudney was invited by Medway Council to feed into their treatment service and was contacted by Wiltshire Police for more information on his findings.

Transparency in industry-NHS collaborations

Dr Piotr Ozieranski (Department of Social and Policy Sciences) published an IPR policy brief, 'Protecting patients and the NHS through full transparency in industry-NHS collaborations', in October 2024. Following this publication and a related BMJ Investigations feature the same month, Dr Ozieranski and Dr Emily Rickard were interviewed for Channel 4's *Dispatches* programme (March 2025). An investigation uncovered breaches of the pharmaceutical industry's Code of Practice and led to a ruling by the Prescription Medicines Code of Practice Authority (PMCPA), highlighting the need for reform as outlined in the policy brief.

Policy Profession Masterclasses

During 2024–2025, we held two Masterclasses with the Policy Profession Unit, attended by over 70 senior policymakers. Feedback from both sessions was positive.

- **Understanding and responding to new local powers.** Speakers: Professor Nick Pearce (IPR) and Dr Jack Newman (University of Bristol). Chair: Charlie Eastaugh, Deputy Director, Home Office. January 2025
- **How to drive cross-departmental collaboration and apply systems thinking for healthier urban environments.** Speakers: Dr Geoff Bates (IPR) and Professor Sarah Ayres (University of Bristol). Chair: Cathy Morgan, Director of Secondary Prevention, Department for Health and Social Care. February 2025



Policy networks and partners

Universities Policy Engagement Network

Universities Policy Engagement Network (UPEN) is a network of 120 UK universities that are working together to increase the public policy impact of their research. It offers a dedicated contact point for policymakers and a collective response to requests for evidence. UPEN also organises knowledge exchange events with government, parliament and devolved bodies and identifies mechanisms to take forward specific projects.

We have shared engagement opportunities from UPEN, and those promoted by UPEN, with colleagues across the University.

The Foundation for Science and Technology

We have continued our membership with the Foundation for Science and Technology on behalf of the University of Bath. The Foundation is a registered UK charity providing an impartial platform for debate of policy issues that have a science, research, technology or innovation element.

Established in 1977, the Foundation brings together parliamentarians, civil servants, industrialists, researchers, learned societies, charities and others. It convenes discussion events, publishes a journal three times each year and hosts a weekly podcast and a blog. In addition, the Foundation provides guidance on governance issues to professional and learned societies. As members of the Foundation, we have shared details of these networking events and opportunities with colleagues across the University, enabling staff to participate and benefit from these initiatives.

The Foundation also organises the Foundation Future Leaders Programme, supporting the next generation of professionals from universities, industry and the civil service. Dr Jordan Tchilingirian, Co-Director of the Centre for the Analysis of Social Policy and Society, was selected to be a 2025 Foundation Future Leader. During the

year-long programme, he will meet senior figures from government, academics and industry leaders, enabling collaboration, learning and knowledge exchange.

UK Universities Climate Network

UK Universities Climate Network (UUCN) is a group of 85 UK universities and research organisations working together to promote a zero-carbon, resilient future. The network enables collaboration across the UK academic sector to advance climate action nationally and internationally. It disseminates climate change research and analysis, conducting evidence-based public engagement and sharing evidence for climate action with policymakers, such as UK government officials, to support the integration of science and policy.

Opportunities for academics to engage with this network are cascaded to relevant colleagues across the University.



International policy engagement

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Climate Catalysts Mentorship Programme

In September 2024, the IPR, Cambridge Zero and the Centre for Science and Policy (University of Cambridge) delivered a series of four workshops for young climate leaders as part of the Climate Catalysts Mentorship Programme, a collaborative programme from the UNFCCC's Youth4Capacity and United Nations Development Programme's Youth4Climate initiatives.

These workshops aimed to help young climate leaders develop the knowledge and skills needed to engage more effectively with climate policy processes at both international meetings and within their own

geographies. Over 800 young people registered for the programme. Workshop speakers included experts from Bath and Cambridge, including Professor Chris Skidmore, Amy Thompson and Annabelle Foot (University of Bath) and Professor Sir David King and Dimitri Zenghelis (Cambridge).

ActNowFilm: Youth Climate Leaders as Agents of Change

ActNowFilm is an international youth climate leaders project run by the IPR and Cambridge Zero. Since the production of the first ActNowFilm for the 2021 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26), the team has worked to amplify and empower young voices in international climate negotiations.

The 2024 film, *Youth Climate Leaders as Agents of Change*, weaves together the insights of global climate experts with the narratives and actions of young people from across the world. Telling a story of impact and agency, it demonstrates the global and interconnected nature of the climate crisis. It highlights the imperative need for ambitious climate action and calls for the official integration of young people in climate negotiations.

Applications to take part in the film were open to any young person under 35. We filmed eight young climate leaders and eight climate experts from around the world. Participating climate experts included Christiana Figueres, Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim and President Mary Robinson.

The film was showcased at six events at COP 29 in November 2024, with events taking place in both the Blue and Green Zones.

- **11 November 2024, Area B, Blue Zone: Decoding UNFCCC language.** A workshop for youth climate leaders that explored some of the complex terminology used within the UNFCCC framework
- **12 November 2024, SDG Pavilion, Blue Zone: The role of youth action in SDGs.** A panel discussion featuring participants in this year's ActNowFilm that examined the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), their interconnections and the role that youth play in addressing them

- **14 November 2024, Global Alliance of Universities on Climate Pavilion, Green Zone: ActNowFilm and youth climate action.** A panel discussion with film participants and members of the ActNowFilm project team
- **16 November 2024, Capacity-Building Hub, Blue Zone: Film premiere and panel discussion.** The first screening of the film and a panel discussion with film participants and members of the ActNowFilm project team
- **18 November 2024, Youth House, Green Zone: Developing young peoples’ green skills to accelerate a net zero transition.** A British Council event showcasing ActNowFilm and discussing the importance of skills and capacity building and youth inclusion in negotiations
- **18 November, UK Pavilion, Blue Zone: Meaningful integration of youth in climate negotiations.** A panel discussion with film participants and members of the ActNowFilm project team to explore youth involvement in international climate negotiations

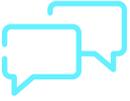
In addition, ActNowFilm was showcased at two London Climate Action Week events in June 2025, one in partnership with Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS-UK) and another in collaboration with the Royal Danish Embassy. Both events featured panel discussions on the importance of young people in climate policymaking. They were attended by over 100 people.

SB 62 climate conference

In May 2025, Amy O’Beirne (IPR) attended the 62nd Sessions of the UNFCCC’s Subsidiary Bodies (SB 62), an annual international gathering that occurs at the midpoint between COP meetings. She was invited by UNFCCC Youth4Capacity to present the ‘Decoding UNFCCC language’ workshop, alongside colleagues from Cambridge Zero, ClimaTalk and ClimateWords. Over 70 youth participants from around the world attended this session and feedback was overwhelmingly positive.



**IPR events and
communications**



IPR events

Between August 2024 and July 2025, we delivered a varied and engaging programme of 11 events, including seminars, lectures, panel discussions and screenings of ActNowFilm. We held events in-person and online, and hosted two events in collaboration with other groups at University of Bath: the Centre for the Study of Violence and the Sustainability and Climate Action Team.

At the start of the academic year, we launched a new lecture series, 'Securing tomorrow: Shaping future governance for people and planet'. This series reflected on the 'year of elections' and considered planning for the long term, looking beyond election cycles to address the national and global challenges we face. The events engaged experts and practitioners to discuss and debate the ways in which we can revitalise and renew democracy and governance, and to discuss ideas on how to build positive futures for people and the planet.

We were delighted to host a range of high-profile speakers as part of this series, including Professor Jens Beckert (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies), Lauren Fedor (*Financial Times*), Will Hutton (Purposeful Company and *The Observer*), Professor Timothy Lang (Centre for Food Policy, City St George's, University of London), Professor Phil Scraton (Queen's University Belfast), Polly Toynbee (*Guardian*), Helen Wakeham (Environment Agency) and Professor Jonathan White (European Institute, London School of Economics).

In total, around 1,250 people attended the events. We achieved additional engagement through our policy podcast series and our online videos, as well as accompanying blogs and social media activity, details of which are given below.



IPR publications

We produced 16 publications during the reporting year. Each publication was delivered to strategic and key contacts working in fields relevant to the publication's findings and recommendations.

- Dickson, M, Maguire, S, Ventura Alfaro, MJ, Laczik, A, Dabbous, D, Newton, O and Thomson, D (2025). Keeping young people in learning until the age of 18 – does it work? Evidence from the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) in England. Institute for Policy Research (IPR), University of Bath.
- Dickson, M, Maguire, S, Ventura Alfaro, MJ, Laczik, A, Dabbous, D, Newton, O and Thomson, D (2025). Keeping young people in learning until the age of 18 – does it work? Evidence from the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) in England (Policy Brief). Institute for Policy Research (IPR), University of Bath.
- Griffiths, R and Wood, M (2025). Going it alone: Experiences of self-employed Universal Credit claimants. Institute for Policy Research (IPR), University of Bath.
- Griffiths, R and Wood, M (2025). Going it alone: Experiences of self-employed Universal Credit claimants (Policy Brief). Institute for Policy Research (IPR), University of Bath.
- Clifton-Sprigg, J, Hunt, A, Zelezetskii, L and Bailey, J (2025). Costs and benefits of improved leave for fathers in the first year: Too good to ignore. Institute for Policy Research (IPR), University of Bath.
- García-Lázaro, A, Kanabar, R and Webb, S (2025) Downhill all the way?: What should pension schemes assume about pensioner spending through retirement? Institute for Policy Research (IPR), University of Bath.
- Muers, S. (2025). Social impact investment as a policy tool. Institute for Policy Research (IPR), University of Bath.
- Wood, M, Griffiths, R and Pearce, N (2025). 'A big, vast, grey area': Childcare and Universal Credit. Institute for Policy Research (IPR), University of Bath.

- Wood, M, Griffiths, R and Pearce, N (2025). ‘A big, vast, grey area’: Exploring the lived experiences of childcare for parents on Universal Credit. Institute for Policy Research (IPR), University of Bath.
- Chrisp, J, Pearce, N, Richiardi, M and van de Ven, J (2024). UBI-eh? Strengthening minimum income guarantees, universality and unconditionality in the UK working-age welfare state (Version 2). Institute for Policy Research (IPR), University of Bath.
- Ananth, P (2024). Learning from the public: Using qualitative research methodologies in consultations. Institute for Policy Research (IPR), University of Bath.
- Dimos, C, García-Lázaro, A and Carter, C (2024). Revisiting productivity and innovation in the West of England: Analysis based on microdata. Institute for Policy Research (IPR), University of Bath.
- Ozieranski, P, Larkin, J, Rickard, E, Ozaki, A, Mulinari, S, MacLeod, R and Sansom, K (2024). Protecting patients and the NHS through full transparency in industry-NHS collaborations. Institute for Policy Research (IPR), University of Bath.
- Griffiths, R and Wood, M (2024). Cliff edges and precipitous inclines: The interaction between UC and additional means-tested help (Policy Brief). Institute for Policy Research (IPR), University of Bath.
- Griffiths, R and Wood, M (2024). Cliff edges and precipitous inclines: The interaction between UC and additional means-tested help. Institute for Policy Research (IPR), University of Bath.
- Clifton-Sprigg, J, Fichera, E, Jones, M and Kaya, E (2024). Shared Parental Leave: Did it work? Institute for Policy Research (IPR), University of Bath.



Media

In collaboration with the University of Bath Communications Department, we have assisted with providing and developing press coverage opportunities for academics, where there have been strong links or relevance to our research. IPR academics and publications received over 150 media mentions in the reporting period, including coverage in outlets such as the BBC and BBC Radio, Channel 4, the *Financial Times* and *FT Adviser*, the *Guardian*, *La Tribune*, *The Observer* and *Times Higher Education*.



Social media, newsletter, policy podcast, videos and blog

Social media and newsletter

We use social media platforms to engage with interested individuals and organisations. Our reach and engagement on LinkedIn continues to grow, with approximately 2,700 followers on the platform. Our presence on Bluesky has similarly expanded, with regular posting beginning in February 2024. The IPR Bluesky account now has approximately 600 followers. Due to falling levels of engagement, we ceased posting on X (Twitter) in January 2025.

We continue to distribute a fortnightly e-newsletter to a mailing list of around 3,500 subscribers. Our newsletter highlights the IPR's latest news, events, research and publications and continues to be an effective method for engaging with external stakeholders who are not on social media.

Policy podcast

Our policy podcast series, shared on SoundCloud, allows those who miss our events, or those located internationally, to catch up on the best of our lectures and seminars. During 2024–2025, we uploaded seven recordings, which have received over 1,200 listens. We received over 8,100 listens across the podcast series. To date, we have shared 139 recordings on SoundCloud, and these have received over 135,600 listens in total.

Videos

Our videos, shared on YouTube, similarly enable people to revisit the best of our lectures and seminars. The IPR YouTube channel gained approximately 130 subscribers during 2024–2025, bringing us to a total of over 860 subscribers. We shared seven new videos on the channel and received approximately 7,700 views across the channel's content. To date, we have uploaded over 170 videos and received more than 56,600 views in total.

In addition, videos on the ActNowFilm YouTube channel (including the new 2024 ActNowFilm trailer and film) received over 5,800 views during 2024–2025.

Blog

The IPR blog offers expert analysis, debate and comment on recent developments across UK government, policy and academia, and pieces to supplement our publications and events. During 2024–2025, we published 85 blog posts and received around 24,100 blog views. To date, we have published over 660 posts and received approximately 359,000 views.



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