

Summary of academic engagement activity (2023)

The Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) manages a range of activities for individual academics and higher education institutions to get involved in the work of Parliament. Below is a summary of academic engagement activity that took place during 2023. [Academic engagement | Scottish Parliament Website](#)

January – March 2023

SPICe published the second in a series of blogs from **Dr Stephen Knox**. Stephen worked with SPICe as an [Academic Fellow](#) and his blog: '[Supporting creative enterprises – exploring the impact of finance initiatives](#)' investigated the impact of various policies that aimed to develop the creative industries, a key sector in Scotland.

SPICe published a guest blog: '[What can we learn from the COVID-19 response in supporting migrant and minority ethnic populations?](#)' This blog summarised the findings from an expert review for the Scottish Government Coronavirus (COVID-19) Learning and Evaluation Oversight Group. The study was led by **Dr Paulina Trevena**, with **Dr Anna Gawlewicz** and **Professor Sharon Wright** of the University of Glasgow in collaboration with the charities Feniks, Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland (BEMIS) and the Scottish Refugee Council (SRC).

SPICe hosted a seminar* on 'Scottish Fiscal Commission: the latest economic and fiscal outlook for Scotland'. In this seminar, the Scottish Fiscal Commission (SFC), led by SFC Chair and Professor in Economics at the University of Glasgow, **Professor Graeme Roy**, presented its latest economic and fiscal forecasts.

April – June 2023

During the second week of May, SPICe hosted **Dr Tamsin Edwards**, Reader in Climate Change, King's College London. Dr Edwards is the UK Parliament [Thematic Research Lead](#) (TRL) on Climate and Environment. TRLs are part of a pilot approach being taken at the UK Parliament where mid-career researchers are embedded in the parliament for a number of days a week to work on specific research themes. The aim is to allow parliamentary staff to share and develop expertise to inform scrutiny, legislation and debate that addresses key economic and societal challenges.

Retained EU law and the UK Government's Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill were both hitting the headlines in May of 2023. SPICe hosted a seminar* where **Dr Christopher McCorkindale** of Strathclyde University explained retained EU law to Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs), their staff and parliament staff.

SPICe welcomed **Natasha Lee** from the University of Northumbria via the [UKRI Policy Internships Scheme](#). Natasha was based in our Financial Scrutiny Unit on a three-month placement looking at the charitable sector in Scotland.

Professor Graeme Roy, Professor in Economics at the University of Glasgow, and **Professor David Ulph**, Professor Emeritus in the School of Economics and Finance at the University of St Andrews, presented the findings of the [Scottish Fiscal Commission's first Fiscal Sustainability Report](#) at one of our SPICe Seminars*.

September – December 2023

In September, **Allison Catalano**, economist, and **Chirsty McFadyen**, Knowledge Exchange Associate of the Fraser of Allander Institute published [a blog as part of their work as Academic Fellows exploring the disability employment gap in Scotland](#). In January 2014, the fellows published a longer briefing summarising their findings: ['The declining disability employment gap in Scotland: Understanding the reasons behind the increasing number of disabled people in employment'](#)

Through the second half of 2023 and continuing into the start of 2024, **Hannah Randolph**, economist at the University of Strathclyde's Fraser of Allander Institute, has been analysing patterns of economic inactivity due to ill health in Scotland. In particular, she has explored the link between inactivity and health inequalities, and access to healthcare via NHS waiting times. The fellowship is due to be finalised in the first quarter of 2024.

Also during the second half of 2023, and continuing into 2024, **Gemma Davies**, Professor of Law at Durham University, and **Helena Farrand Carrapico**, Professor of International Relations and European Politics at Northumbria University, have been undertaking research on criminal justice and policing after Brexit. The research seeks to understand the impact of the current legal and political (Scottish-EU) landscape on the criminal justice system. A final report is expected in the first half of 2024.

Dr Tom Caygill, Senior Lecturer in Politics, Nottingham Trent University, worked with the SPICe on an Academic Fellowship. Tom's fellowship on [Institutionalising Post-Legislative Scrutiny](#) looks at past and current practices to assess the impact they have on institutionalising post-legislative scrutiny.

The Scottish Parliament's Citizen Participation and Public Participation Committee published a report from an inquiry into [Public Participation in the work of the Scottish Parliament](#). The Committee made recommendations about helping citizens to better understand how they can get involved in the work of the Parliament, and on reducing barriers to people participating. SPICe hosted a seminar* where **Professor Sabina Siebert**, University of Glasgow, and **Dr Andy Williamson** explored the Committee's findings and the implications of its recommendations.

Linked to the Committee's work, **Dr Adam Chalmers** of Edinburgh University and Andrew Aiton of SPICe published a blog in November which outlined Dr Chalmers' work as an Academic Fellow examining [how the Parliament can trace public engagement through the parliamentary process](#).

In a complimentary Academic Fellowship, **Dr Ruth Lightbody** of Glasgow Caledonian University is expected to publish her recommendations on developing a practice framework for People's Panels in February. Recruitment for the evaluation contract covering two upcoming people's panels launched in December, and was awarded to a team of researchers and academics from the School of Social and Political Science at the University of Edinburgh.

SPICe hosted a seminar* on 'Zero emissions heating: what are the key challenges?'. In this breakfast seminar, three speakers including **Dr Jamie Speirs**, Research Fellow Centre for Environmental Policy at Imperial College London, considered the main heating technology options for zero carbon heat in Scotland.

*About SPICe Seminars

SPICe Seminars are internal events designed to enable Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs), their staff and parliament staff access to external expertise, including academics, by developing understanding and awareness of issues and encouraging engagement and debate among parliamentarians.