



## Pandemics workshop – January 2020

On 20 January 2020 the British Academy and Wellcome held a joint workshop on the topic of pandemics, which brought together a range of researchers, policymakers and practitioners. *Social sciences and humanities: taking the next steps* explored the vital contributions of the social sciences and humanities to pandemic preparedness and response. Fortuitously, the event took place when the Covid-19 pandemic was coming to both global and UK attention, and at a time when many participants were also engaged with urgent work on the evolving situation.

The workshop was jointly chaired by a group from the Institute of Development Studies (Professor Melissa Leach FBA, Dr Hayley MacGregor and Dr Annie Wilkinson) and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (Professor Melissa Parker).

Themes covered during the event included:

- Policy perspectives on the role that the social sciences and humanities currently play in terms of pandemic preparedness and response, and areas where there is greater scope for these disciplines to be involved in pandemic preparedness and response in future.
- The various complexities of pandemics and how a viewpoint that purposefully considers the complexity of a situation, for example from the perspective of anthropology or sociology, can provide an invaluable contribution to enriching the dialogue around pandemic preparedness and response.
- The importance of learning from the past, and how historical and anthropological studies can be utilised in pandemic preparedness and response.

Following the workshop a [blog](#) was published on the SSHAP website, which gives an overview of the discussions at the event. Since the workshop took place much Covid-19 focused work, including by [SSHAP](#) and the British Academy's [Shape the Future](#) and [Covid-19 & Society](#) programmes have been helping to make the vital point covered within the workshop that it takes cross-disciplinary working and the inclusion of insights from across the humanities and social sciences, together with the medical and physical sciences, in order for pandemics preparedness and responses to be fully effective.