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# SHAPE the Future – Resilience, recovery and renewal

# Call for evidence

**Please complete this form and return by email to** **covidandsociety@thebritishacademy.ac.uk** **by Friday 29 August 2025**

**For any queries please contact:**

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## Background

The British Academy is launching a new phase of our [*SHAPE the Future*](https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/programmes/covid-19-shape-the-future/) programme, which seeks to bring together insights and evidence from the Academy’s last four years of work and from the wider SHAPE (Social Sciences, Humanities and the Arts for People and the Economy) community, to examine the progress made against the long-term societal impacts identified in the Academy’s 2021 [*Covid Decade* reports](https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/projects/covid-decade/) and offer lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic. In doing so, we hope to mark the middle of the 2020s - the ‘Covid decade’ – with reflections on the country’s policy response to the challenges of recovery and renewal following the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Aims of the call

In this next phase of work, we are seeking engagement with a wide range of individuals and organisations with expertise on the core public policy areas of focus identified in *Covid Decade* as being key for successful social and economic recovery:

* **Health and wellbeing**
* **Digital society**
* **Social and cultural infrastructure**
* **Education and employment**

In each of these policy areas, we wish to analyse them with these five cross-cutting themes in mind:

* **Governance -** How Covid-19, and the government response to it, has affected relationships between national and local actors, accountability for decisions, and freedom of the individual.
* **Trust -** How Covid-19, and the government response to it, has affected society’s trust in information, data, the media, political institutions, and the role of science and experts.
* **Cohesion -** The effect of Covid-19, and the government response to it, on relationships within and between communities of people and ideas.
* **Inequalities -** The role of Covid-19, and the government response to it, in highlighting, ameliorating, causing or exacerbating inequalities.
* **Sustainability -** How Covid-19, and the government response to it, has affected the way we think about, and the importance we attribute to, issues of sustainability and how we balance present needs against preparing for the future.

**Responding to the call**

Responses to the call for evidence should consider the main policy challenges within these policy areas but should also consider the effects as related to one or more of the cross-cutting themes. For example, your evidence could look at how Covid-19 has changed inequalities in mental health provision, how Covid-19 has had an impact on trust and cohesion in a particular local area, or how Covid-19 has raised questions about sustainability and our relationship with nature.

To help with our analysis, we ask that you aim to provide your evidence as a response to the following questions (if you provided evidence to the first phase of the SHAPE the Future/COVID Decade work, please consider these with respect to the main challenges and opportunities in the policy areas that you identified in your evidence submission):

* What progress has been made since the Covid-19 pandemic? What challenges remain or have since emerged?
* What lessons are there from the pandemic for government’s preparation for, response to, and recovery from major societal threats? Is there evidence that government is aware of these and, where we have seen policy interventions, what effects have these had?
* How would you evaluate the strength of the UK’s institutions and governance structures in providing effective policymaking in responding to major societal threats and how they can be improved?
* Are there any international examples of policy interventions to address the impact of the pandemic and/or prepare for future emergencies that the UK could learn from?

Respondents should aim to draw on evidence from either existing research or from their professional experience in the areas under investigation. This might include, for example: survey data, interviews and focus groups, reflections from practitioners, case studies, historical examples, or insights from experiential or quasi-experimental studies. Please provide references and links to relevant sources wherever possible.

**Publication of evidence**

The evidence collected in this call will be analysed alongside evidence from the British Academy’s policy programmes and funded research since the publication of the original COVID Decade reports, as well information gathered through a reference group of external stakeholders, and continued engagement with the British Academy Fellowship and research award holders. A final report is expected to be published in early 2026 based on the analysis of evidence from these sources

The British Academy policy team plans to publish a list of the responses that we receive in response to this call as part of an [evidence hub](https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/projects/covid-decade/evidence/) on the British Academy website, as we have done for earlier phases of the SHAPE the Future/COVID Decade programme. We ask for your contact details so that we can engage with you on this consultation if needed, but we will keep any contact details provided confidential.

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| **Do you agree to the British Academy publishing your submission in a public evidence hub on the Academy’s website?** | Yes / no (delete as appropriate) |

 **Your response**

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| **Full name** |  |
| **Job title** |  |
| **Organisation / University / Research institute** |  |
| **Contact email**  |   |

| **Question** | **Response** |
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| **Does your evidence have relevant insights for one or more of these public policy areas? Select all that apply.**  | * Health and wellbeing
* Digital society
* Social and cultural infrastructure
* Education and employment
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| **Does your evidence touch on one or more of these cross-cutting themes? Select all that apply.** | * Governance
* Trust
* Cohesion
* Inequalities
* Sustainability
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| **Question 1:** What progress has been made since the Covid-19 pandemic? What challenges remain or have since emerged? (Links are permitted) |  |
| **Question 2:** What lessons are there from the pandemic for government’s preparation for, response to, and recovery from major societal threats? Is there evidence that government is aware of these and, where we have seen policy interventions, what effects have these had? |  |
| **Question 3:** How would you evaluate the strength of the UK’s institutions and governance structures in providing effective policymaking in responding to major societal threats and how they can be improved?  |  |
| **Question 4:** Are there any international examples of policy interventions to address the impact of the pandemic and/or prepare for future emergencies that the UK could learn from? |  |