Historians in the Policy Environment

Policy forum

Wednesday 29th June 2011, 5pm

Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, School of Oriental and African Studies, Thornhaugh Street, London WC1H 0XG

Organised by the Centre for History in Public Health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

How and why are insights from history used in health policy making?

What does the relationship between history and policy look like from inside government?

What helps the process and what hinders it?

What do historians need to do to improve their impact on policy?

This session will bring together historians who have been involved in the policy process, with civil servants from historical backgrounds who operate within the policy environment. Both sets of participants will recount their experiences and reflect on general principles which can be drawn from them.

Chair: Virginia Berridge (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

James Kneale (UCL) and James Nicholls (Bath Spa) both work on the history of alcohol and gave evidence to the House of Commons Health committee during its enquiry into alcohol in 2009. Its report was published early in 2010.

James Kneale was also a contributor to the Royal Geographical Society Policy Briefing paper ‘Consumption controversies: alcohol policies in the UK’ (2010) which was launched at Westminster.

James Nicholls has subsequently been awarded an AHRC knowledge transfer fellowship working with the Department of Health’s Alcohol Improvement programme.

David Turner is an historian who is the committee specialist for the House of Commons health committee.

Melissa Smith gained a PhD at Manchester in the history of science policy and was awarded an ESRC funded POST (Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology) fellowship in Westminster to examine the relationship between history and policy. She now works within government for the Office of Civil Society on the government’s ‘Big Society’ agenda.

Jill Rutter joined the Institute of Government as a Whitehall secondee in September 2009 and was co-author of the Institute’s report on arm’s length bodies, Read Before Burning (July 2010). She has also been part of the better policy making project. Before joining the Institute for Government, Jill was Director of Strategy and Sustainable Development at Defra. Prior to that she worked for BP for six years, following a career in the Treasury, where she was Press Secretary, Private Secretary to the Chief Secretary and Chancellor, as well as working on areas such as tax, local government finance and debt and export finance. She spent two and a half years seconded to the No.10 Policy Unit (1992-94) where she oversaw health, local government and environment issues.

Attendance to this forum is free and open to all - if you would like to attend, please RSVP to healthinhistory@sas.ac.uk.