

SPRU Wednesday Seminar

Date 12 March 2014

Speaker Sarah Main (CASE)

Title How to persuade a politician – making the case for science investment

Abstract

Money is tight and an election is looming. Treasury ask, 'what's the value of the marginal pound?' Or, 'why should we give spare money to you and not them?' And, indeed, 'why should we take from them to give to you?'

Science has some high profile political proponents. And yet scientists feel squeezed. CaSE aims to be the voice of UK science and engineering, always seeking to raise its political profile and convey its economic and cultural value to government. I find myself doing a lot of persuading. By building trust, through friendships, networks, back routes, in the media and (we hope) by providing some timely, killer evidence.

I hope to reflect with you on the contradictions and challenges of what CaSE tries to do and consider how we can work better with science policy academics to strengthen our case for the next term of government.

Bio

Sarah is Director of the Campaign for Science and Engineering (CaSE), the leading independent advocate for science and engineering in the UK.

Before joining CaSE, Sarah worked on strategy and policy at the head office of the Medical Research Council in some of the MRC's highest priority areas. She gained first-hand experience of central government policy-making whilst on secondment to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) in 2012-13, where she wrote a report on the leveraging power of public funding of science and research for the UK economy.

Sarah is an experienced scientist having spent ten years as a biomedical research scientist with Cancer Research UK and the Medical Research Council in London and Cambridge.