

Dr Joseph Sherlock

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PROFILE

Applied behavioural-public-policy scholar with twelve years' experience working between academia and practice. My research asks how behavioural science, field experimentation and institutional design can help governments act more intelligently, legitimately and effectively across democracy and election administration, sustainable transport and environmental behaviour, health and public services, and government capability. I originate and build long-running programmes with public institutions, moving from diagnosis and co-design through rigorous experimentation to implementation and learning. That trajectory has taken me from HM Revenue & Customs and Public Health England to leading a five-person-plus applied-government research team and multimillion-dollar programmes at Duke, and now to King's, where since January 2025 I have combined research, award-recognised teaching, programme and doctoral leadership, administration and partnership-building. I also serve as a Behavioral Science Fellow in the United Nations Secretary-General's Office and Adjunct Faculty at Duke. This blend of scholarship, government experience and institution-building equips me to contribute immediately to the School for Government's next phase of growth.

CURRENT APPOINTMENTS AND ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

King's College London, School for Government / Policy Institute | January 2025-present

Lecturer in Behavioural Science and Public Policy (Assistant Professor)

Programme Lead, MSc Health and Social Care Policy, from September 2026.

PGR Senior Tutor and doctoral research-seminar convenor, from September 2025.

Programme Director/Lead, Government of Jersey professional-development programme.

Deputy Director, Behavioural Public Policy Lab.

SSLC Chair.

Project Lead, LA Metro One Car Challenge Phase 2.

Co-lead, Evidence Exchange (EvEx) hub at King's; partnership development with NHS England.

United Nations, Secretary-General's Office | January 2025-present

Behavioral Science Fellow

Advises and supports the UN Behavioural Science Group, UN Innovation Network and partner programmes.

Led the process securing €150,000 from the Basque Government for UN-led work on behavioural science and localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Duke University, Sanford School of Public Policy | September 2018-present

Adjunct Lecturer / Adjunct Faculty

Designs and leads postgraduate and international executive teaching in applied behavioural science, public policy and human-centred design, including repeated online delivery.

Leads the recurring, credit-bearing Behavioral Economics for Development summer programme; delivered the 2026 cohort of 16 learners online across multiple time zones.

EDUCATION

PhD, Psychological and Behavioural Science, London School of Economics and Political Science | August 2021-July 2025
Thesis: Behavioral Science to Strengthen Democracy.

MSc Social Policy, London School of Economics and Political Science | August 2013-October 2014
High Merit; distinction for dissertation; Titmuss Prize for best dissertation.

BSc (Hons) Psychology, University of Bath | August 2009-June 2013
First Class Honours.

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

- Hopkins, S.-A. M., Rayburn-Reeves, R. M., Lindemans, J. W., O’Gorman, K. C., Vandewalker, I. A., Luebeck, C. A., & Sherlock, J. J. (2025). Politricks: Teaching political tricks and discernment through active and passive tools. *PNAS Nexus*, 4(8), pgaf245. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgaf245>
- Vepachedu, S., Nurzenska, A., Lohiniva, A. L., Hudi, A. H., Deku, S., Birungi, J., Greiner, K., Sherlock, J., & Foster, L. (2024). Understanding COVID-19 vaccination behaviors and intentions in Ghana: A Behavioral Insights (BI) study. *PLOS ONE*, 19(2), e0292532. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0292532>
- Gargantini, T., Daly, M., Sherlock, J., & Lazebnik, T. (2022). Providing safe space for honest mistakes in the public sector is the most important predictor for work engagement after strategic clarity. *Sustainability*, 14, 7051. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14127051>
- Gavin, L., McChesney, J., Tong, A., Sherlock, J., Foster, L., & Tomsa, S. (2022). Fighting the spread of COVID-19 misinformation in Kyrgyzstan, India, and the United States: How replicable are accuracy nudge interventions? *Technology, Mind, and Behavior*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.1037/tmb0000086>
- Whillans, A., Sherlock, J., Roberts, J., O’Flaherty, S., Gavin, L., Dykstra, H., & Daly, M. (2021). Nudging the commute: Using behaviorally-informed interventions to promote sustainable transportation. *Behavioral Science & Policy*, 7(2), 27-49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/237946152100700204>
- Gold, N., Tan, K., Sherlock, J., Watson, R., & Chadborn, T. (2021). Increasing uptake of NHS Health Checks: A randomised controlled trial using GP computer prompts. *British Journal of General Practice*, 71(710), e693-e700. <https://doi.org/10.3399/BJGP.2020.0887>
- Sallis, A., Sherlock, J., Bonus, A., et al. (2019). Pre-notification and reminder SMS text messages with behaviorally informed invitation letters to improve uptake of NHS Health Checks: A factorial randomized controlled trial. *BMC Public Health*, 19, 1162. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-7476-8>

SELECTED CHAPTERS, REPORTS AND POLICY OUTPUTS

- Sherlock, J. (2024). Behavioral Science to Save Democracy. In A. Samson (Ed.), *The Behavioral Economics Guide 2024* (pp. 13-22).
- Remote work and people in government. OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation, Case Study Library (organisational case study).
- Sherlock, J., et al. (2021). Fit for Purpose: Using Behavioral Insights to Equip Public Servants for Agenda 2030. In United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Changing Mindsets to Realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (Chapter 7, pp. 86–93). UN DESA.
- Bartmann, N., Hopkins, S.-A., Luebeck, C., & Sherlock, J. (2023). Fresh Start Effect in New Movers: A Pilot to Reduce SOV Trips. Duke University.
- Common Cents Lab. (2016–2019). Common Cents Lab Annual Report series: 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 (four reports). Center for Advanced Hindsight, Duke University. Contributing author.

MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW OR REVISED AND RESUBMITTED

- Akesson, J., Hahn, R. W., Metcalfe, R., & Sherlock, J. Reducing Energy Arrears: Evidence from Four Natural Field Experiments. Under review at *The Review of Economics and Statistics*.
- Sherlock, J., Hopkins, S.-A., Daly, M., Powell, O., & Szczesiul, A. When the Rubber Meets the Road: Environmental Framing Shifts Minds, but Financial Frames, Pain of Payment and Friction Reduction Shift Behavior. Under review at *Travel Behaviour and Society* (TBS-D-2026-00603).
- Hopkins, S.-A., Sherlock, J., Martinez Daniel, E., Luebeck, C., Gavin, L., & Daly, M. Motivating Change: How Multi-Dimensional Framing and Locus of Control Shape Pro-Environmental Behavior. Under review.
- Sanders, M., Ellingwood, J., & Sherlock, J. A Perspective on Recent Meta-Analyses on the Effects of Nudging. Commentary revised and resubmitted to *Behavioural Public Policy*.
- Sherlock, J., Vepachedu, S., Daly, M., & Tatman, T. A. Beyond Resource Provision: Resource Utilization Predicts Employee Well-Being and Productivity in a Longitudinal Remote Work Field Experiment. Under review at *Applied Psychology: Health*

and Well-Being (manuscript 5944192).

Gómez, M., Soto-Mota, P., van Roekel, H., Bowers, J., Tummers, L., Fuenzalida, J., Kristal, A., Arcain, P., Iocco, M. P., Massaro, S., Sherlock, J., Collis, H., & Hein, A. Behavioral Interventions for Goal Setting and Social Ties among Remote Public Servants: Insights from a Field Experiment. Under review at the Journal of Behavioral Public Administration.

Barkley, A., Martinez Daniel, E., & Sherlock, J. Capture without Confusion: Voter Experience with Democracy under Ranked-Choice Voting. Under review at the Journal of Experimental Political Science.

Sherlock, J., Daly, M., Gavin, L., Szczesiul, A., & Beasley, M. Personalized Routing Reduce Driving Alone: Evidence from 2 Field Studies. Revised and resubmitted to Behavioural Public Policy.

Sherlock, J., Hopkins, S.-A., & Moore, D. Who Are Effective and Trustworthy Messengers for Election-Related Communications? How Local Messengers Impact Effectiveness of Psychological Inoculation. Submitted to the Journal of Experimental Political Science.

Sherlock, J., & Daly, M. Surfacing Electoral Processes: Operational Transparency Increases Trust in Elections and Voter Turnout. Under review at Nature Human Behaviour. Preprint: <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-7153108/v1>

Sherlock, J., & Sanders, M. The Future of Research (Field Experiments) in an AI-Driven Landscape. Comment under review at Nature Human Behaviour.

Sherlock, J. Behavioural Science to Strengthen Democracy: Evidence and Opportunities in Election Administration. New Voices article under review at Behavioural Public Policy.

SELECTED WORK NEARING SUBMISSION OR IN PREPARATION

Sherlock, J., Frech La Rosa, H., Salas, L. M., & Sanders, M. Can Taxpayer Choice Raise Voluntary Public Revenue? Evidence from Bogotá. Paper nearing submission to the Journal of Public Economics.

Sanders, M., Hirneis, V., Benoit, Y., & Sherlock, J. Leading or Following? Who Leads, Who Follows, Who Tells the Story: Three Experiments on Political Leadership and Public Opinion. Nearing submission to the Journal of Experimental Political Science.

Hopkins, S.-A., Bartman, N., Sherlock, J., Gavin, L., & Guruprasad, S. Relocation and the Re-Formation of Car Dependence: Field Evidence from New Movers. Nearing submission to Behavioural Public Policy, Voices from the Field.

House, T., McElvaney, T., Sherlock, J., Luetchford, A., Henstock, T., Dewey, E., Ledgard, C., & Berry, D. Understanding Responses to NHS Waiting List Validation Messages. Four-study paper in preparation; intended submission to The BMJ in September 2026.

Sherlock, J., Rush, M., & Johnson, M. Behavioral Spillovers as a Result of Municipal Food Waste Collection. In preparation; target journal: Nature Sustainability.

RESEARCH FUNDING AND CONTRACTS

Secured since joining King's

LA Metro / Southern California Association of Governments, One Car Challenge Phase 2 | £111,982 | Project Lead | 2026 | Awarded and active. King's value includes £26,854 toward overheads.

ESRC IAA support, Evaluation Task Force conference | £10,000 | Bid author and event-development lead | 2026 | Secured event/impact funding; conference delivered on 19 June 2026 to approximately 400 attendees.

ESRC IAA Rapid Response Fund, Bringing the Magic to Government | £5,000 | Project Lead | 2026 | Awarded; cross-government conference scheduled for 8 September 2026.

King's-linked funding secured since January 2025: £126,982.

Partnership-enabled international funding

Basque Government / United Nations, Advancing Localisation of the SDGs Through Behavioural Science with the Basque Government | €150,000 | Funding lead; Behavioral Science Fellow | 2026-27 | Awarded and signed by the UN; UN-led funding, not King's income.

Selected awarded programmes before King's

Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayors Challenge | \$1,000,000 programme value | Programme Lead; team of 5+ | 2018-22.

Burt's Bees / Clorox recycling programme | \$50,000 | Project Lead; team of 3 | 2019-20.

North Carolina municipal-government COVID-19 programme | \$100,000 | Project Lead; team of up to 6 | 2020-21.

Triangle J Council of Governments, habit discontinuity and travel behaviour | \$70,000 | Research-programme lead | 2020-22.

UNICEF misinformation and vaccination programme | approximately \$100,000 | Co-lead; team of 8 | 2021-22.

Environmental Research & Education Foundation, municipal food-waste collection | \$150,000 | Project Lead; team of 4 | 2021-23.

Federal Transit Administration / LA Metro, Travel Rewards | \$1,200,000 programme value; \$250,000 recorded research component | Key research lead | 2021-24.

Haas Foundation and Brennan Center for Justice, behavioural science and democracy | \$250,000 | Programme leadership | 2021-23.

Russell Sage Foundation, remote work, wellbeing and productivity | \$120,000 | Project Lead | 2022-24.

Combined headline value of the nine pre-King's programmes: approximately \$3.04 million. This is total programme value, not institutional income or funding paid personally to me.

Selected active proposals

ESRC Connect: Building the UK Field of Behavioural and Experimental Democracy Research | £50,196.87 | Project Lead | Awaiting decision.

Cabinet Office: Synthetic Panels for NHS Evaluation Triage | £90,909.29 | Project Lead | Submitted.

EPSRC / EDRC: rapid evidence review of residential demand flexibility | £49,958.41 | Project Lead | Submitted.

UKRI: Wildfire Ready | UK Lead | Expression of interest submitted; full proposal in draft.

Evidence Exchange / NHS England: three advanced proposals for a policy lab, fellowship and cross-cutting RA | approximately £85,000 combined | Funding agreed in principle; final confirmation/contracting pending; excluded from secured-income totals.

IMPACT, INNOVATION AND SERVICE

HM Treasury and HMRC: led more than 20 field and laboratory studies informing Help to Save and contributing to substantial increases in savings among participating households across the UK. Selected as one of four leading government behavioural-innovation projects for Behavioural Exchange 2019.

Sustainable transport and environmental innovation: developed personalised-route prototypes and randomised trials through the Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayors Challenge, translating the evidence into an app that reduced single-occupancy travel and scaled through a US business-to-business model; retained as adviser. LA Metro subsequently retained me as PI and launched a countywide 2,000-household phase from a 297-household pilot; results are forthcoming. In Durham, my programme reduced landfill-bound waste by 5.8 pounds (9%) per household per week; the city continued and expanded its food-waste provision.

Government of Jersey: led and strengthened delivery within an existing £300,000, three-cohort programme, rebuilding partner confidence and developing renewal/accreditation options and a wider Innovation Team proposal. Renewal and the Innovation Team remain under discussion.

UK government convening: wrote the successful £10,000 bid and helped lead the Evaluation Task Force conference on 19 June 2026 for approximately 400 attendees; secured £5,000 and am leading the cross-government behavioural-science conference with HMRC and partners on 8 September 2026.

Democracy and election administration: led operational-transparency studies with California election offices that became adaptable, white-label communications recommended by the Center for Civic Design for use across jurisdictions and live elections; co-organised the School's Keeping Democracy Strong Solidarity Symposium on 19 March 2026, connecting work on participation, disinformation, institutional design, polarisation and democratic resilience.

Evidence Exchange and NHS England: co-lead a partnership built around a four-study waiting-list programme and linked policy-lab, fellowship and research-capacity proposals. Funding is agreed in principle, with final confirmation/contracting pending, creating a strategic institutional platform for colleagues and doctoral researchers.

EDUCATION AND PROGRAMME LEADERSHIP

King's College London

112 formally recorded contact hours delivered in 2025–26, plus approximately 60 hours of executive and government education outside the formal workload record – around 172 hours overall; 129 formal contact hours planned for 2026–27.

2025 Policy Institute Innovation in Teaching Award for an in-person live experiment in Behavioural Science - Health and Social Care Policy.

Programme Lead, MSc Health and Social Care Policy, from September 2026.

Programme Lead, Government of Jersey professional-development programme, including curriculum renewal, partner management and all-year policy-project guidance.

Teaching across Health and Social Care Policy, Civil Service Fast Stream, participatory and deliberative governance, approaches to policymaking, communications, behavioural insights, Bahrain and Oman executive provision, and doctoral education.

The Policy Process: 4.3/5 overall; 4.4/5 for clarity and inclusion.

Assessment experience includes module marking and second marking, three King's dissertations marked, Fast Stream assessment, dissertation supervision and an Executive MPA capstone supervised through submission.

Duke University

Lead or co-lead across postgraduate, undergraduate and executive courses since 2018, in person and online.

Designed and led Humans and Government and the recurring, credit-bearing Behavioral Economics for Development summer programme; lead or co-lead across Behavioral Economics for Municipal Public Policy, Applied Behavioral Science and Human Centered Design for Innovation.

Humans and Government: 4.8/5 overall against a departmental average of 4.14.

Repeated online executive delivery across time zones using live and asynchronous formats; 2026 summer cohort of 16 learners.

Supervised six Duke MPPs as adviser or independent-study roles

Advance HE Fellowship application submitted in August 2026; outcome pending.

DOCTORAL AND POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISION

Five current King's doctoral researchers: Lauren Bailey (first supervisor); Jesper Aakesson (first supervisor); George Kinead (second supervisor; thesis all but submitted, viva panel appointed and defence expected in early autumn); Eldes Hutagalung/Nata (second supervisor, upgrade passed and in fieldwork); Vanessa Hirneis (second supervisor, approaching upgrade).

Vanderbilt University: doctoral panel/committee member for Erin Hafkenschiel; preliminary examination passed June 2026.

Postgraduate supervision: three current King's master's dissertations; Craig Morley's Executive MPA capstone supervised through submission; six previous Duke MPP project-reader, adviser or independent-study roles.

ADMINISTRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

PGR Senior Tutor, King's Policy Institute, since September 2025.

Designed and led the monthly doctoral seminar series, writing days, shared infrastructure and poster day. End-of-year survey: seminars 4.0/5; poster day 4.1/5; continuing writing days 4.3/5; seven of ten respondents rated connection/community at 4 or 5.

SSLC Chair; Deputy Director, Behavioural Public Policy Lab; doctoral research-seminar convenor; Programme Director for Jersey.

Incoming Programme Lead, MSc Health and Social Care Policy.

International executive-programme development includes an approved Bahrain healthcare-programme proposal moving through contracting and active delivery/planning with the Royal Academy of Management, Oman.

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT

Duke University | Principal Behavioral Scientist / Senior Behavioral Scientist | October 2016-July 2025 Created, funded and led a five-person-plus applied-government research team; directed multi-year field-experimental programmes and government partnerships.

HM Revenue & Customs | Principal Behavioural Science Advisor; formerly Senior Behavioural Science Advisor | November 2016-July 2020 Behavioural research and experimentation in tax administration, savings and public services.

Behavioural Insights Team / Public Health England | Behavioural Researcher | October 2014-May 2015 Designed and evaluated behavioural interventions in public health, including NHS Health Checks.

System One Consulting, London | Co-founder and Director | September 2014-December 2016.

Clear M&C Saatchi, London | Junior Consultant | August 2011-August 2012.

SELECTED EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

Selected presentations and invited engagement: Behavioural Exchange 2019, The best of behavioural science in UK Government: moving from micro to macro (selected to present HMRC/Help to Save work alongside Sir Patrick Vallance and senior government behavioural-science leaders); United Nations Behavioural Science Week (2025); the Federal Reserve (2017); Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting (2020); EREF Science Session, How Behavioral Science Fueled a Winning Curbside Composting Program (July 2024).

Selected convening: Keeping Democracy Strong Solidarity Symposium (19 March 2026); Evaluation Task Force conference (19 June 2026; approximately 400 attendees); Bringing the Magic to Government cross-government behavioural-science conference (scheduled 8 September 2026).

Selected media and public coverage: NPR Marketplace, Pew Charitable Trusts, Fast Company, Bloomberg Cities and the Eno Center for Transportation.

METHODS AND SOFTWARE

Randomised field experiments; survey and laboratory experiments; exploratory and mixed-methods research; causal inference; intervention design; programme evaluation; behavioural and administrative data. Stata, R, Qualtrics, Excel.