

ESU MOTION FACT FILE



This House Believes That education policy should be set by a panel of experts, not by politicians

Should education policy should be set by a panel of experts or by politicians?

Some background information

The government's policies on education are hugely important for the future of the country. The vast majority of young people are educated in schools funded by the state and most of those who go into further education are also subject to government policy. There are many critics of policy-making in this area, however.

Politicians often like to change policies to match their beliefs about what is best and to bring about the sort of system they favour. This can lead to lots of frequent change and instability which is unhelpful for teachers and students who like to be able to plan ahead. While MPs often listen to expert opinion they are generally not education experts and so these policy changes are not always grounded in best practise.

Experts do have their limitations as well, of course. Politicians point to narrow thinking within a specific field, when the government needs to consider a wide range of priorities and balance between them. Experts also lack a democratic mandate as the people are not able to vote them in and out of power if they are unhappy with how things are done. Other people ask 'Which experts'?

Education policy is hugely important, so who do you think should be making the decisions?

Starter questions

What special skills/attributes do politicians have, and what special skills/attributes does a panel of experts have?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of being (a) accountable to the public or (b) a healthcare expert when making health policy decisions?

Can you think of some examples of health policy decisions that (a) healthcare experts and (b) politicians would and wouldn't make?

