



HOUSE OF COMMONS



HOUSE OF LORDS

Rules for depositing papers in the Libraries of the House of Commons and House of Lords

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Publishers

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1. Deposited papers and the Libraries

The deposited papers set comprises documents placed in the House of Commons or House of Lords Library by a Minister or by the Speaker or the Lord Speaker and not laid before the House in any other way (i.e. not a command paper or House of Commons paper etc).

The commitment to place these papers in the Libraries is usually made in a written statement, in response to a parliamentary question or in the course of debate. It is also possible to deposit material by authority of a letter from a Minister.

Documents deposited in the Library by Members of Parliament answering questions on behalf of organisations such as the Church Commissioners or the Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority and the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission are also treated as deposited papers, as are documents sent by the Statistics Authority.

Shadow ministers and backbenchers are not permitted to deposit documents in the Library.

The Libraries are obliged to keep deposited papers in perpetuity and make them available to Members and their staff (see Annex 1: extract from Erskine May, 23rd Edition p242).

The Libraries may also be required to supply copies of deposited papers to members of the public via the House of Commons Information Office or Parliamentary Archives.

If Government Departments receive requests directly and hold the material requested, they should deal with the request, referring enquirers to the Information Office or Archives only if they no longer hold the material.

Papers deposited in hard copy before 2007

Requests to supply pre-2007 Deposited Papers will be considered on their merits and treated in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998. Original versions of pre-2007 Deposited Papers will always be made available to Members; they will be checked for compliance if requested by the public and any necessary redactions made before supply.

Papers deposited electronically since 2007

Papers sent electronically (see below) are available in full text on the Parliamentary website. The list of Deposited Papers can be found at <http://deposits.parliament.uk/>.

Security requirements

Please note: Papers deposited since 2007 are made available to the general public via the Parliament website as supplied by you.

You must ensure that the security of the format used reflects the sensitivity of the information contained in the documents (eg that redactions cannot be reversed) and, to the extent that the information consists of personal data, that the publication of the information is compliant with your obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Withdrawing papers

We will not withdraw papers once deposited in order for the content to be changed, but will on occasion agree to remove or replace electronic copies; this is only in exceptional circumstances where data protection or security has been breached, such as a version having been sent in which redaction can be reversed to reveal redacted information. In these instances, a copy of the original version will be retained for access by Members only.

In all other cases where Departments wish to deposit an amended or corrected version for any other reason, we will not remove or replace the original document deposited but add the new version to the record. The basic principle is that deposited papers are in the public domain and cannot be withdrawn.

Q&A portal

The new Q&A portal includes the facility for departments to include up to three attachments of papers referred to in PQs and written statements, but if there is a formal ministerial commitment to deposit a paper in the libraries it should continue to be deposited in the normal way.

Deposited papers are completely separate from the Q&A portal.

2. Rules for sending documents to the Libraries for deposit

The following rules must be followed by all departments and agencies wishing to deposit material in the House of Commons and House of Lords Libraries.

- i. A document must have a ministerial commitment to deposit; without this it will be refused by the Library.
- ii. All deposited papers must be sent electronically to depositedpapers@parliament.uk and must include a completed Library coversheet as a separate attachment, for each deposit.

This e-mail address is to be used for Commons and Lords deposits which form a single series. Coversheets can be downloaded from the Parliamentary website or sent out by request from the Library.

The Libraries reserve the right to refuse documents not accompanied by a correct and complete coversheet.

- iii. Items for deposit must be sent as one of the following file types:
 - MS Word
 - Excel
 - PDF
 - Jpg
 - Tif
 - Gif
 - Raw
 - Rtf

- PowerPoint
- Txt
- csv

Large items should be zipped using WinZip, or broken into smaller files before sending. Please send the document as an attachment rather than sending the link to an existing url.

If deposits include figures or statistical tables please could they be provided in xls or csv as far as possible. This will enable public data to be published in reusable, machine-readable form.

- iv. Items that originate from outside of the issuing department, for example from an agency, should be requested in electronic form from that source.
- v. Items for deposit that did not originate electronically, for example older typed or printed documents, should be scanned and sent as an attachment. If this is impossible then the rules set out in section 3 must be followed.
- vi. As good practice please phone and check with us, on 020 7219 3666, if you think we might have a document already.
- vii. Deposited papers must be sent to the Libraries on the day of answer of the question, or the day of the statement.

Deposits can be sent in advance of the question or statement, but this information must be entered on the coversheet along with the parliamentary question number (the UIN number as appears in Hansard). If the UIN is not yet known, please do not send the document until it is.

- viii. The wording of the written answer or statement must use the phrase “placed in the Library” or “deposited in the Library”; it should *not* use the word “laid”. These phrases must also be used in Ministerial letters.

If a written statement is referring to the publication of a Command paper then the statement should refer Members to the Vote Office or Printed Paper Office, and not the Library.

- ix. All letters from Ministers should be saved as individual files, especially if the text of each is different, even if they relate to the same issue, e.g. a debate on a particular Bill. If a letter is sent to numerous Members, but with exactly the same text, we only need one copy of the letter.
- x. Items not included in the deposited papers collection, unless they are specifically placed by a Minister include:
 - Consultation documents & responses
 - Impact Assessments
 - Transport and Works Act applications
 - Maps accompanying Sis
 - Departmental minutes
 - Hansard correction letters
 - Planning Policy Statements
 - Social Fund allocations
 - Memoranda of Understanding & concordats
 - EU Council of Ministers conclusions
 - Framework documents
 - Delegated powers memorandum

These rules do not affect any current practices departments have in relation to the Vote Office or Printed Paper Office. Please continue to supply them with documentation as usual.

3. Non electronic items

We expect departments to go to every effort to send us material electronically, but where this is impossible the following exceptions are permitted:

- Items that are, or would be, very large in size
- Items that did not originate electronically and are too large to scan
- 'Artefacts' such as CD-ROMs and DVDs

Before sending a hard-copy document telephone the Deposited Papers Clerk on 0207 219 2004

In these exceptional circumstances hard copies should be sent to the libraries with a printed Library cover sheet; an electronic coversheet must still be e-mailed to depositedpapers@parliament.uk with a brief explanation of why the item is not available electronically.

Delivery arrangements for hard copy

Two copies to need to be supplied to the following addresses

The Deposited Papers Clerk
Members' Library
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 2004

The Deposited Papers Clerk
The Library
House of Lords
SW1A 0PW
Tel: 020 7219 1215

These addresses should only be used in exceptional circumstances when electronic format is impossible. Please call the above numbers if you have any queries about this.

If a CD-ROM is being supplied (the preferred route for depositing if an electronic version cannot be supplied, normally for reasons of length), it is only necessary to send one copy of the disk to the Commons Library, informing us in advance as above. The content will be downloaded and treated as a normal electronic receipt.

4. 'Will write' letters

Following a statement by, then Leader of the House, Peter Hain on 21st July 2004 (c35-6WS), Ministers have been directed to minimise the use of "will write letters" in response to Parliamentary questions. The statement says:

“On those occasions where an “I will write” answer is necessary, a copy of the subsequent substantive response will be sent to Hansard and to the Library, and will be printed with the written answers in the next edition of Hansard. If the subsequent response is longer than Hansard would normally publish, notification will be printed that the response is available in the Library of the House.

The response will be available to Members in the Library and to the public on application to the House of Commons information Office.

If Ministers wish to provide, in response to a question, personal or confidential information that would not be appropriate for publication, this will be made clear in the answer. The “I will write” formula will not be used and copies will not be sent to Hansard or the Library”.

Particularly in the House of Lords, follow-up letters to debating points are always included in the Deposited Papers collection when promised by Ministers.

5. Written statements

Written ministerial statements should be sent separately from deposited papers and sent to the two libraries as soon as they are available. Please e-mail an electronic copy of the written statement to hclibrary@parliament.uk and also to hllibrary@parliament.uk with the statement number, as it appears on the Order Paper, in the subject field.

Statements should never be sent to the deposited papers e-mail address. If a deposited paper is mentioned in a statement then this information should be included on the cover sheet that accompanies the deposited paper. The document should not be sent with the statement.

6. Boundary Commission material

Please send any Boundary Commission material to the Library Resources Section in the House of Commons Library. They no longer form part of the Deposited papers collection.

Delivery arrangements:

Library Resources Section
House of Commons Library
1 Derby Gate
London
SW1A 2DG
Tel: 020 7219 4331

7. Impact Assessments

Impact Assessments relating to primary legislation (i.e. Bills) should be sent electronically to the House of Commons Library at all stages.

Please email electronic copies and any enquiries to: impactassessment@parliament.uk

8. Frequently Asked Questions

- **Do deposited papers have to conform to a standard format?**

Unlike laid papers, deposits do not have to be in a particular format (they may for instance be pamphlets, tables, letters, sample documents etc) however we do have specific file criteria which we ask departments to adhere to regarding the sending of electronic documents (see section 2.iii)

- **Can we deposit in recess?**

Yes. We accept deposited papers throughout recesses.

- **Can we withdraw a document once it has been deposited?**

No, items cannot be withdrawn, although a replacement document can be sent for deposit **as well as** the original. We will only agree to replace electronic copies where data protection or security has been breached such as reversible redaction, with a copy of the original version retained for access by Members only.

- **Will the document be in the public domain once it has been deposited?**

Yes. Deposited papers from 2007 onwards are all in the public domain and are not subject to any embargos, nor can any be placed on them once they have been deposited. See Section 1 for subsequent requests for alterations. Pre- 2007 Commons deposits can be requested by members of the public via the House of Commons Information Office, or directly to the issuing department. Lords deposits can be made available via the Parliamentary Archives. Requests will be considered on their merits and treated in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998. See Section 1 for procedures relating to any potential redaction. Enquirers will be able to view material in the Parliamentary Archives or request a copy from them.

Deposited papers are kept in perpetuity.

- **We think the deposit is already in the Library, do we have to deposit it again?**

If the document you wish to refer to has already been deposited in the Libraries in response to a previous question or statement, then you do not need to send it to us again. However, you *must* check with the Library to confirm that it is already here. If it has been confirmed that we do hold the document then the deposited paper number should be obtained from the Libraries and referred to in the answer.

- **Do annual/regular deposits need a Ministerial commitment each time they are sent to the Library?**

Yes, a public commitment is needed from the Minister each time the document is to be placed in the Library.

- **We want to deposit a document that has not yet been mentioned in a PQ or statement but may do in the future.**

We request that documents are sent to us with the PQ number or statement that triggers the deposit, so we ask that the document is not sent until this information is known and can be entered on the cover sheet.

- **What happens to documents that do not meet the criteria and are not official deposits?**

The Library is not obliged to keep items that have not been placed by a Minister, although we do sometimes keep material for the information of Members and Peers in other collections. We must stress that if a document is deemed of sufficient importance to Members and Peers then it should be formally deposited by a Minister to ensure that it is made available in perpetuity. As well as the ways outlined above, the Minister could write to a relevant Select Committee or another Member as a useful method for depositing.

For example, simply mentioning within Explanatory Notes to a Bill or in the text of any other document that they will be placed or available in the Library will not be acceptable as a sufficient commitment to deposit.

- **Do we still need to send hard copies to the Vote office and Printed Paper Office?**

Yes. If you anticipate that a document is going to be in high demand then you should also send hard copies to the VO and PPO **as well as** sending an electronic version to depositedpapers@parliament.uk If in doubt please feel free to contact us.

- **Can you explain the relationship between Library deposits and the file attachments in the new House Q&A system for electronic submission of PQs?**

The Q&A portal is entirely separate from the deposited papers. While we understand documents can be attached to answers in the portal, documents referred to in parliamentary questions and written statements as being placed in the Library should continue to be submitted as deposited papers to the Libraries.

Further information

- Annex 1 – copy of page 242 of Erskine May
- Annex 2 – copy of the cover sheet
- Annex 3 – quick guide to depositing in the House Libraries

Annex 1 – copy of page 136 of Erskine May

Deposited papers are documents which are not published as Command or House of Commons papers nor formally laid before the House, but which, since 1832, have been deposited in the Library by the Speaker or a Minister for the use of Members. Private Members may not deposit documents in the Library in this way.⁶⁴

Since October 2007 deposited papers have generally been received in electronic format, and are made available via the Parliament website. From that date they have been organised in a single series with similar documents deposited in the House of Lords Library. The act of depositing a paper in the House of Commons Library does not constitute publication. Deposited Papers are not confidential and many are available elsewhere, for example from departments or their websites. Members of the public who wish to have access to a document that is not otherwise available (for example because it was produced before the Library's publication policy began) should contact the House of Commons Information Office in writing or by e-mail.

64 HC Deb (1985–86) 90, cc 313–14; *ibid* (1989–90) 169, c 26.

Erskine May, *Parliamentary Practice*, 24th edition, 2011, p136

Annex 2 – copy of the cover sheet

Document for deposit in the House of Lords or House of Commons Libraries

Email to: depositedpapers@parliament.uk

Department / Agency:

Parliamentary Question

Statement

Debate

Committee

Letter

Deposit details – e.g. UIN of PQ / Statement No. / Name of debate / Letter details

Date of commitment to place in the Library:

Please ensure that the security of the format used reflects the sensitivity of the information contained in the documents (e.g., that redactions cannot be reversed) and, to the extent that the information consists of personal data, that the publication of the information is compliant with your obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Please phone the Deposited Papers Clerk in either Library if you are making a HARD COPY deposit.

- Commons: 020 7219 2004
- Lords: 020 7219 5242

For Library use only:

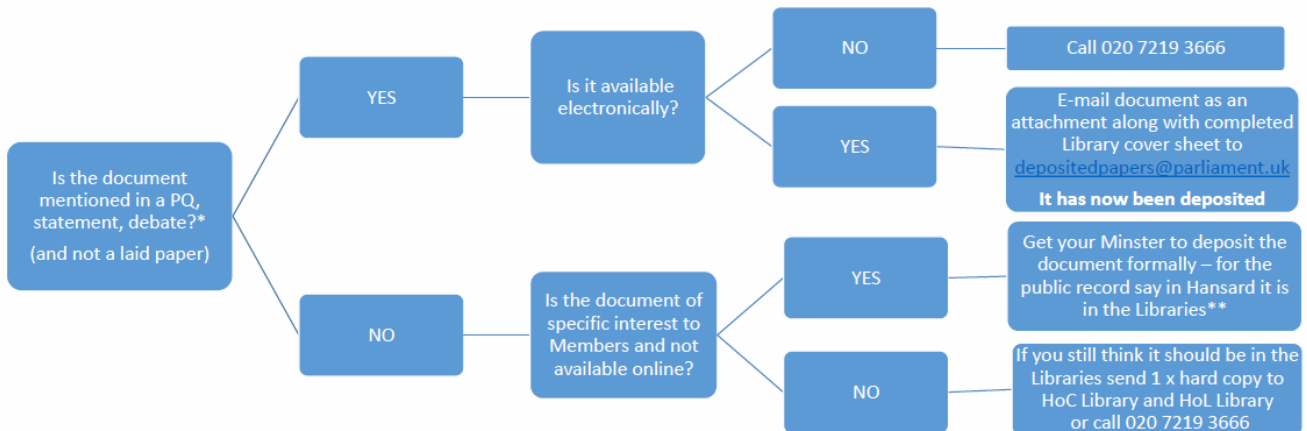
Deposit Reference:

Date Received:

Notes:

Annex 3 – quick guide to depositing in the House Libraries

Annex 3 – Quick Guide to Depositing in the House Libraries



*Or a letter from a Minister that says in the text “a copy of this letter is in the Libraries of the House”

** Or provide a covering letter addressed to the Deposited Papers Clerk signed by a Minister stating that the Minister wishes to deposit the material in the Libraries

Non-illustrated version of Annex 3

- Is the document mentioned in a PQ, statement, debate?* (and not a laid paper)
 - YES
 - Is it available electronically?
 - NO
 - Call 020 7219 3666
 - YES
 - E-mail document as an attachment along with completed Library cover sheet to depositedpapers@parliament.uk. It has now been deposited
 - NO
 - Is the document of specific interest to Members and not available online?
 - YES
 - Get your Minister to deposit the document formally – for the public record say in Hansard it is in the Libraries**
 - NO
 - If you still think it should be in the Libraries send 1 x hard copy to Commons Library and Lords Library or call 020 7219 3666

*Or a letter from a Minister that says in the text “a copy of this letter is in the Libraries of the House”

** Or provide a covering letter addressed to the Deposited Papers Clerk signed by a Minister stating that the Minister wishes to deposit the material in the Libraries