

Deposited Papers

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

June 2011

Guidelines on Deposited Papers

1. Deposited papers and the Libraries

The deposited papers set is comprised of documents placed in the House of Commons or House of Lords Library by a Minister or by the Speaker or the Lord Speaker and which is not laid before the House in any other way (ie is 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 in response to written requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, therefore departments must be aware that deposited papers are in the public domain and cannot be withdrawn.

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/>.

Please note: Deposited Papers 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 (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.

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 reserves 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.
- ix. 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: The Deposited Papers Clerk
Members' Library
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Tel: 020 7219 2004

Two copies to: The Deposited Papers Clerk
The Library
House of Lords
SW1A 0PW

Tel: 020 7219 5772

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.

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.

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

Yes. Deposited papers 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. Members of the public can request to see any deposited paper via their MP, through the House of Commons Information Office, or directly to us or to the issuing department under the Freedom of Information Act.

Deposited papers are kept in perpetuity and these rules apply to papers deposited before the Freedom of Information Act came into force.

- **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.

- **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.

ANNEX 1 – copy of page 242 of Erskine May

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12. *Precincts and organization of Parliament*

Members' staff in the Derby Gate Building, which also houses most of the Library staff, including its research service, and in Portcullis House.

The collections of the Library include a definitive set of sessional papers and other documents related to the business and proceedings of the House. The Library also holds volumes of the *Official Report* of both Houses as well as United Kingdom statutes and statutory instruments and European Union legislation, together with other documents from the European Union and from other international organizations and such books, journals, newspapers and other material in printed, machine-readable or audio-visual form as may be required by Members in connection with their duties as parliamentarians. A book loan service is available to Members.

The Library also maintains a series of documents known as 'Deposited Papers'. These 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.¹ A list of recent Deposited Papers is available on the Parliament website. 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 should contact the House of Commons Information Office in writing or by e-mail. Requests for copies are currently considered on their merits and, from January 2005, will be treated in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (see p 269). Older or voluminous documents are available for inspection in the House of Lords Record Office (Parliamentary Archives).

The Speaker has directed that the Library should make available to Members all documents placed in the Library which relate to their work in the House, including papers which are marked confidential.²

The Library's research staff respond on a confidential basis to requests from individual Members and their personal staff for specialised information required in connection with the Member's duties. They also prepare a range of briefing material, available to all Members, on legislation and other topics of current interest.

A number of information services are made available to Members electronically via the Parliamentary Network (PN) (see also p 268). These services include access to the full text of Research Papers and other analytical content, and interactive services including statistical profiles of constituencies. In addition the Library subscribes to many on-line commercial services, including newspaper and periodicals databases, and makes these available on the PN.

¹ HC Deb (1985–86) 90, cc 313–14; *ibid* (1989–90) 169, c 26.

² HC Deb (1968–69) 780, cc 491–92.

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.

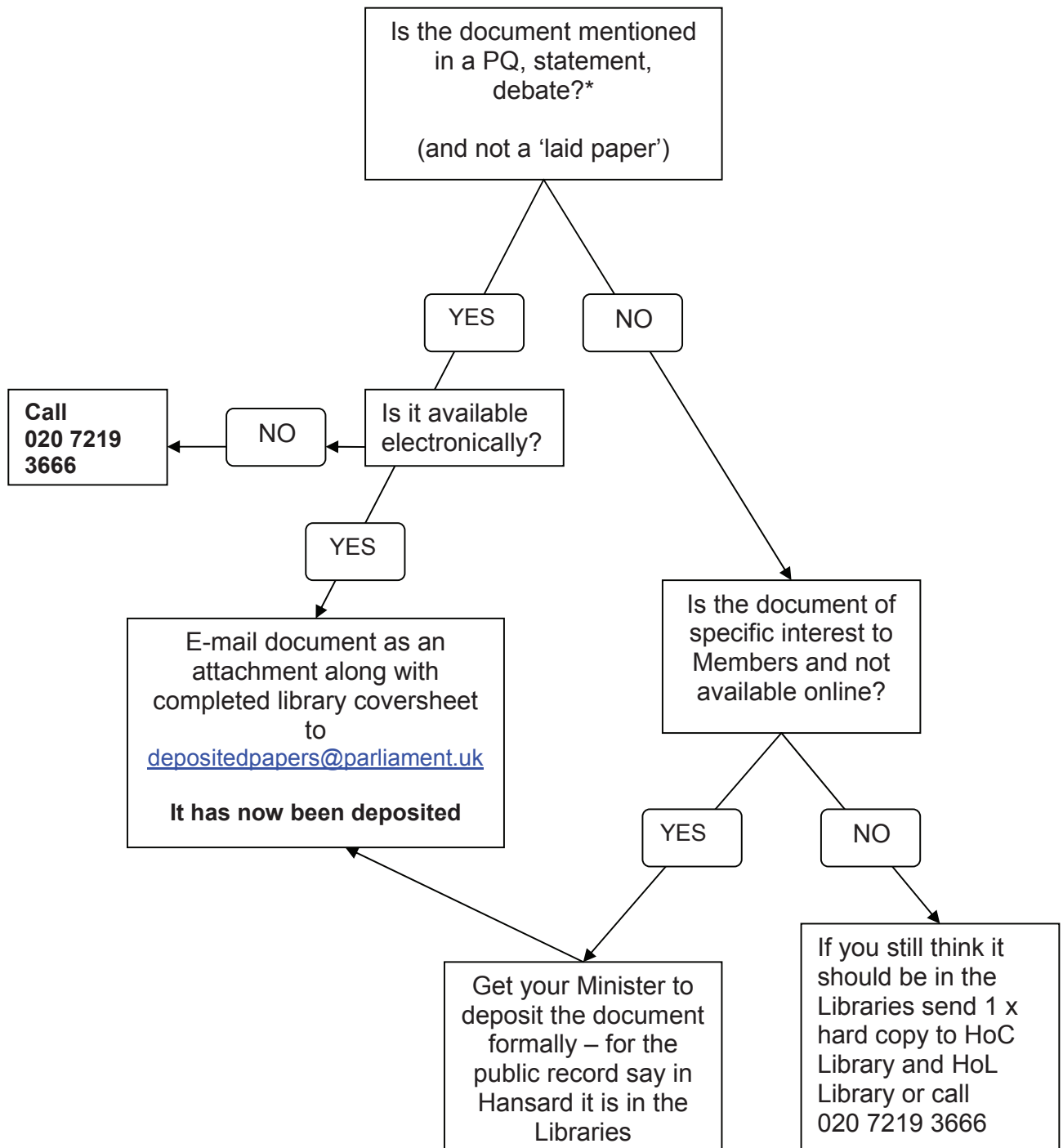
Commons: 020 7219 2004 Lords: 020 7219 5242

For Library use only:

Deposit Reference: Date Received:

Notes:

ANNEX 3 – quick guide to depositing in the House Libraries



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

Laura McDonald
Deposited Papers Clerk

Members' Library
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Tel: 020 7219 3666
E-mail: hclibrary@parliament.uk