This Members’ Handbook is a guide to the services and facilities provided to help you as a Member as well as your staff at Westminster and in your constituency.

This guide is also available on the intranet at intranet.parliament.uk/commons-members-handbook.
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GUIDANCE ON CONDUCT AND USE OF PARLIAMENTARY RESOURCES

You must familiarise yourself with the Members’ Code of Conduct (pages 6–9), which has been agreed by the House of Commons and establishes the standards and principles of conduct expected of all Members.

The House provides various facilities and services to Members, the cost of which is either met in full or subsidised by public funds.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Stationery and postage
- Accommodation, including offices and meeting rooms
- Research support
- Computer equipment and services
- Catering facilities.

You are personally responsible and accountable for ensuring that your use of any expenses, allowances, facilities and services provided from the public purse is in accordance with the rules laid down on these matters.

You must ensure that your use of public resources is always in support of your parliamentary duties. It must not confer any undue personal or financial benefit on you or anyone else, or confer undue advantage on a political organisation. You must never undertake any action which would cause significant damage to the reputation and integrity of the House of Commons as a whole, or of its Members generally.

You should make yourself familiar with the Statement on what Members can expect from the House Service, and on what is expected in return, which has been agreed by the House of Commons Commission (pages 10–11).

Please note that further guidance on the rules of the House is contained within the relevant sections throughout the Members’ Handbook.
ICT ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY
You should be aware of the Acceptable Use Policy relating to the use of parliamentary ICT equipment (pages 12–13). It covers use of the Parliamentary Network, PCs, laptops, Wi-Fi and internet connections, printers, fax machines, and telecommunications of all types.
Please note that you will be asked to sign this on behalf of yourself and your staff.

RESPECT POLICY
Allegations of bullying or harassment of House staff by Members or their staff are dealt with under the Respect Policy, which the House has endorsed. The aim is for confidential and informal resolution wherever possible, with mediation also being a possibility if all parties agree this might be useful.
In escalated cases, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards has power to investigate, and to report inappropriate conduct to the Committee on Standards which can, if necessary, report the matter to the House.

Members can obtain guidance on the operation of the policy from their whips or from the Members’ HR Advice Service.

Respect Policy
intranet.parliament.uk/equality-diversity-respect

House of Commons Committee on Standards, First Report (Session 2014-15), Respect Policy

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmstandards/321/32102.htm
THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Prepared pursuant to the Resolution of the House of 19 July 1995

I. PURPOSE OF THE CODE
1. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist all Members in the discharge of their obligations to the House, their constituents and the public at large by:
   a) establishing the standards and principles of conduct expected of all Members in undertaking their duties;
   b) setting the rules of conduct which underpin these standards and principles and to which all Members must adhere; and in so doing
   c) ensuring public confidence in the standards expected of all Members and in the commitment of the House to upholding these rules.

II. SCOPE OF THE CODE
2. The Code applies to Members in all aspects of their public life. It does not seek to regulate what Members do in their purely private and personal lives.
3. The obligations set out in this Code are complementary to those which apply to all Members by virtue of the procedural and other rules of the House and the rulings of the Chair, and to those which apply to Members falling within the scope of the Ministerial Code.

III. DUTIES OF MEMBERS
4. By virtue of the oath, or affirmation, of allegiance taken by all Members when they are elected to the House, Members have a duty to be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen, her heirs and successors, according to law.
5. Members have a duty to uphold the law, including the general law against discrimination.
6. Members have a general duty to act in the interests of the nation as a whole; and a special duty to their constituents.
7. Members should act on all occasions in accordance with the public trust placed in them. They should always behave with probity and integrity, including in their use of public resources.

IV. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT
8. In carrying out their parliamentary and public duties, Members will be expected to observe the following
general principles of conduct identified by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in its First Report as applying to holders of public office. These principles will be taken into account when considering the investigation and determination of any allegations of breaches of the rules of conduct in Part V of the Code.

**Selflessness**
Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

**Integrity**
Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

**Objectivity**
In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

**Accountability**
Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

**Openness**
Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

**Honesty**
Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

**Leadership**
Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

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1 Cm 2850-I, p 14
V. RULES OF CONDUCT

9. Members are expected to observe the following rules and associated Resolutions of the House.

10. Members shall base their conduct on a consideration of the public interest, avoid conflict between personal interest and the public interest and resolve any conflict between the two, at once, and in favour of the public interest.

11. No Member shall act as a paid advocate in any proceeding of the House.  

12. The acceptance by a Member of a bribe to influence his or her conduct as a Member, including any fee, compensation or reward in connection with the promotion of, or opposition to, any Bill, Motion, or other matter submitted, or intended to be submitted to the House, or to any Committee of the House, is contrary to the law of Parliament.

13. Members shall fulfil conscientiously the requirements of the House in respect of the registration of interests in the Register of Members’ Financial Interests.

They shall always be open and frank in drawing attention to any relevant interest in any proceeding of the House or its Committees, and in any communications with Ministers, Members, public officials or public office holders.  

14. Information which Members receive in confidence in the course of their parliamentary duties should be used only in connection with those duties. Such information must never be used for the purpose of financial gain.

15. Members are personally responsible and accountable for ensuring that their use of any expenses, allowances, facilities and services provided from the public purse is in accordance with the rules laid down on these matters. Members shall ensure that their use of public resources is always in support of their parliamentary duties. It should not confer any undue personal or financial benefit on themselves or anyone else, or confer undue advantage on a political organisation.


3  Resolutions of 2 May 1695, 22 June 1858, and 15 July 1947 as amended on 6 November 1995 and 14 May 2002

16. Members shall never undertake any action which would cause significant damage to the reputation and integrity of the House of Commons as a whole, or of its Members generally.

VI. UPHOLDING THE CODE

17. The application of this Code shall be a matter for the House of Commons, and particularly for the Committee on Standards and the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards acting in accordance with Standing Orders Nos 149 and 150 respectively.

18. The Commissioner may investigate a specific matter relating to a Member’s adherence to the rules of conduct under the Code. Members shall cooperate, at all stages, with any such investigation by or under the authority of the House. No Member shall lobby a member of the Committee in a manner calculated or intended to influence its consideration of an alleged breach of this Code.

19. The Committee will consider any report from the Commissioner to it and report its conclusions and recommendations to the House. The House may impose a sanction on the Member where it considers it necessary.
The first goal of the House Service is that Members feel they are receiving an excellent service from all House of Commons staff.

House staff are not civil servants, but employees of the House, formally appointed by the House of Commons Commission.

House staff are expected to be as helpful as possible, to be professional and innovative and to strive for excellence, effectiveness, efficiency and accuracy in all that they do.

They are required to serve the House, its committees and Members, and the public, with honesty and probity and so uphold the reputation of the House.

Members can expect House services to be provided with complete political impartiality, and that briefing and advice are not influenced by the personal opinions of individual members of staff. House staff who advise Members are not allowed to take part in any political activities. Members must not ask House staff to help them with party political activities.

House staff must ensure as far as practicable that every Member receives the same standard, range and quality of services.

House staff must respect the confidentiality of their dealings with Members and must handle private information appropriately.

House staff must treat Members with courtesy and respect. They must behave in a way that promotes dignity and respect at work at all times and under all circumstances.

House staff are likewise entitled to be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect. Members must not discriminate against, victimise, harass or bully any member of staff.

Any complaint about improper treatment of a member of House staff by a Member will be dealt with under the Respect Policy (page 5).
Examples of improper treatment include:

- Ridiculing or demeaning someone
- Threatening remarks or actions
- Misuse of power or position
- Unwelcome sexual advances.

Members can likewise expect to have any complaint about House staff investigated promptly and thoroughly and, if found to have basis, dealt with appropriately.

Members should avoid public criticism of individual members of House staff since members of staff are not able to respond to such criticism publicly. Members of staff should never publicly criticise a Member.

Members can expect House staff to do what is asked of them as long as any request is one which is proper and reasonable within the parameters set by the House of Commons Commission, and that sufficient resources are available to meet it. House staff must refuse to comply with requests which conflict with House policy.

If a Member asks a member of House staff to do something which the member of staff cannot do, the member of staff will explain why he or she cannot do what is asked. If the request appears to be improper, the staff member is expected to report the matter to his or her managers.

Members’ staff and House staff must treat each other with courtesy. House staff will provide help and assistance to Members’ staff (except where this is not permitted by particular rules).
ICT ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (AUP) FOR MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AND THEIR STAFF

This is the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for computer and telecommunications equipment and services provided by the Parliamentary Digital Service and covers your use of the Parliamentary Network, personal computers, laptops, mobile devices, Wi-Fi and internet connections, printers, fax machines, and telecommunications of all types.

WHAT IS UNACCEPTABLE USE?
You must not upload, download, use, retain, distribute, create or access any electronic materials including emails, documents, images, text or software which:

- Might overload, damage, affect, or have the potential to affect the performance of Parliament’s systems, networks and/or external communications in any way
- May be a breach of copyright and/or licence provisions
- Might gain access to restricted or unauthorised areas of the Network, websites or other hacking activities
- Could be threatening, defamatory, abusive, indecent, obscene, racist or illegal
- Might be considered spam by other users of the Parliamentary Network, such as indiscriminate global emails
- Might put the reputation of Parliament at risk
- Could be considered party political campaigning or fundraising and, in the case of Commons Members, private business activity

In addition, you must not read other users’ mail or other material without their express permission, or store private material not connected to the purpose of Parliament on the Network.

WHAT PROTECTION IS AVAILABLE?
Parliament automatically blocks specific categories of websites that may cause a threat to the Parliamentary Network. This measure has been introduced to help adhere to the above policy and for the protection of you and other users of the Network. The Digital Service provides antivirus software and firewalls to protect parliamentary users from malicious attack. These systems are regularly updated and tested.
The use of strong passwords, screen savers and timed lockouts also offers protection against unauthorised access.

**USE OF PERSONAL EQUIPMENT**
The direct connection to the Parliamentary Network of equipment not supplied by Parliament, such as PCs and laptops, is not permitted. If you wish to use your own equipment guest Wi-Fi is available across the Estate. Members and their staff can also connect their personally owned devices to a dedicated Wi-Fi network. The guest networks are segregated from the Parliamentary Network and provide internet connectivity only.

Personal handheld mobile devices are permitted to connect to some parliamentary services (e.g. email, calendar, contacts and tasks subject to the relevant policies) but are not permitted to directly connect to the Parliamentary Network.

**PERSONAL SOFTWARE**
Users are advised to consult with the Digital Service before downloading software from the internet or other sources to parliamentary equipment. Software that conflicts with security systems or with the safe operation of parliamentary equipment may result in access to the Parliamentary Network being denied until the software is removed.

The Digital Service reserves the right to remove any personally added software or equipment that interferes with the normal working of parliamentary equipment or the Parliamentary Network.

**DATA PROTECTION**
Parliament adheres to the Data Protection Act (DPA). All use of parliamentary computer facilities should adhere to the DPA and in the case of Members of Parliament to your own DPA registration.

**SPONSORED USERS**
Members are responsible for ensuring that their staff and contractors only have access to those computing and network services that are appropriate for the performance of their duties and must inform the Digital Service when their access requirements need to be changed (for example, when staff move to other duties or leave the House).
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SECURITY & EMERGENCIES
SECURITY

The Serjeant at Arms is responsible for the operational delivery of security in the House of Commons and Black Rod is responsible for the House of Lords. Executive responsibility for the physical, cyber and personnel security of Parliament sits with the Parliamentary Security Director who is accountable to, and works under the political direction of, the Speaker and the Lord Speaker.

The security operation for the Parliamentary Estate is contracted to the Metropolitan Police (whose staff include police and security officers).

Security Control is staffed around the clock to assist Members of both Houses, their staff and employees of both Houses with security matters.

Personal responsibilities
You and your staff should:

- Wear your photo-identity pass at all times on the Parliamentary Estate and take it off when you leave.
- Be aware that you are responsible for the behaviour of your visitors and for ensuring that they are escorted by a passholder in non-public areas.
- Be aware that security is everyone’s responsibility – be vigilant and report any concerns you have.
- Ensure that desks, filing cabinets and cupboards are kept locked when not in use and that keys are not left in easily accessible places.
- Lock away all private and confidential papers and articles of value.
- Keep memory sticks, CDs and other data storage devices in a safe and secure place.
Access regulations

Access to the Estate is generally restricted to Members of both Houses, their staff and employees of both Houses with parliamentary photo-identity passes. Public access is limited to specific areas, such as the Committee Corridor for people attending committee meetings. Visitors to parts of the building to which the public do not have access must be escorted by passholders.

When the House is sitting, only Members and staff of the House with business in nearby offices may use the areas around the Chamber.

You are responsible for your visitors while they are on the Parliamentary Estate.

Members are asked to note that no dogs (other than guide dogs, hearing dogs, assistance dogs, or dogs used for security purposes) are allowed in the Palace of Westminster or any of its outbuildings.
Collecting your security pass
You are issued with a parliamentary photo-identity pass to allow you to access and move around the Parliamentary Estate. Passes are issued by the Pass Offices at 1 Canon Row and Black Rod’s Garden.

Passholders are required to wear their photo-identity passes at all times while on the Estate. Anyone walking around without a visible pass should expect to be challenged. Passes are also required to open many doors around the Estate and to gain pedestrian access to the House.

Routine checks are carried out to ensure that the system is not abused.

If you forget your pass, you will need to go to one of the Pass Offices and collect a day pass. Please inform security immediately if you know or suspect a pass is being misused. You should challenge a person without a pass or report the incident to a member of security staff.

You may sponsor an application by your spouse or partner for a photo-identity pass. For an application form visit a Pass Office.

If a pass is lost or stolen, please report the matter to the Pass Office immediately.

Pass Office opening times
Monday 8am to 6pm*
Tuesday 8am to 6pm*
Wednesday 8am to 6pm*
Thursday 8am to 6pm*
Friday 8am to 4pm

*4pm during recess

Obtain a pass/report a pass lost or stolen
1 Canon Row
Pass Office x5920
Black Rod’s Garden
Pass Office x4760

Report misuse of your pass x3333
passoffice@parliament.uk
intranet.parliament.uk/passes
Car parking

The main car park is located beneath New Palace Yard.

You must register your vehicle with the Pass Office to obtain a car park pass. For access to the car park, both a car park pass and a parliamentary photo-identity pass are required. The pass must be displayed in the associated vehicle at all times whilst parked on the Parliamentary Estate.

Please note that Westminster is in the London congestion charge area.

ICT security

You have a responsibility to help maintain the security of the Parliamentary Network and protect it from cyber threats.

Parliament’s ICT security policy and other guidance documents are available on the intranet. Please also refer to the ICT Acceptable Use Policy for Members of the House of Commons and their staff on page 12. This will be updated from time to time. The latest version is on the intranet and you will be emailed if changes are made.

If you receive a malicious or threatening communication and consider that the matter requires urgent attention, you should contact the police immediately. In all other cases, you are invited to contact the Serjeant at Arms’ Office in the first instance. With your permission, the matter may then be referred on the police for action.
## Entry points

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<tr>
<th>Entrance</th>
<th>Disabled access</th>
<th>Opening times</th>
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<tr>
<td>Black Rod's Garden (Vehicles)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Mon – Thu: 7am – 10.45pm or 30 minutes after rise of the House of Lords&lt;br&gt; Fri: 7am – 8pm&lt;br&gt; Weekends: Closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Rod's Garden (Visitors)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Mon – Fri: 7am – 11pm (passholders)&lt;br&gt; Mon – Fri: 10.45am – 7.45pm (non-passholders)&lt;br&gt; Weekends: Closed&lt;br&gt; Recess: 7am – 8pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Canon Row</td>
<td>Via the Derby Gate pedestrian entrance</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carriage Gates (Passholders only)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cromwell Green visitor entrance</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Mon – Thu: 8am – 10.30pm&lt;br&gt; Fri: 8am – 6pm (open until 8pm for functions)&lt;br&gt; Sat: 8.15am – 6.15pm (during Line of Route only)&lt;br&gt; Sunday: Closed&lt;br&gt; Recess: 8am – 8pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtis Green (Vehicle entrance only)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>For passholders and authorised vehicles:&lt;br&gt; Sitting days: 6.45am – 10.15pm&lt;br&gt; Non-sitting Fridays: 6.45am – 6pm&lt;br&gt; Weekends: Closed&lt;br&gt; Recess: 6.45am – 6pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derby Gate (Vehicle exit only)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance</td>
<td>Disabled access</td>
<td>Opening times</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derby Gate (Pedestrians)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Millbank (Millbank House)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Millbank (Westminster House)</td>
<td>Via the Smith Square side entrance</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Parliament Street</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Open between 6am and 10pm or 30 minutes after rise of the House of Commons (whichever is later)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portcullis House</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Mon – Thu: 7am – 10.30pm or 30 minutes after rise of House of Commons Sitting Fri: 7am – 6.30pm Weekends: Closed Non-sitting Fridays &amp; Recess: 8am – 6.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Stephen’s (Passholders only)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Mon – Thu: 8am – 10.45pm or 1 hour after the rise of the latest House Fri: 8am – 6pm Weekends: Closed Recess: 8am – 8pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subway - Westminster tube station (Passholders only)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Mon – Fri: 7am – 11pm or 30 minutes after rise of the latest House (but no later than 00.30am) Weekends: Closed Recess: 7am – 7pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Tothill Street</td>
<td>Yes (via the main entrance only)</td>
<td>Main entrance: Mon – Fri: 07:30 – 6pm Weekends: Closed Side entrance on Dartmouth Street: 24 hours for passholders only</td>
</tr>
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EMERGENCIES

Information on any incident or changes to access may be communicated to you and your staff in a number of ways, including email, the annunciators and/or the voice alarm system.

Fire

In the event of a fire, or if a fire is suspected, report the emergency immediately by breaking the glass of the nearest fire alarm call point and by calling x3333. Different arrangements exist for different buildings; either a series of taped messages or sounders are broadcast to raise the alarm.

If evacuation is necessary, you and your staff should assemble at designated muster points. Details of the muster points are on blue “Fire” notices by fire alarm call points throughout the Estate.

Dial x3333 for all security, medical and fire emergencies on the Parliamentary Estate
You should NOT call 999
Non-emergency crime x5311
Emergency procedures x3030
intranet.parliament.uk/emergencies
Latest security advice intranet.parliament.uk/security
Accidents, injuries or medical emergencies

In the event of a serious accident or injury on the Parliamentary Estate, you or your staff should call **x3333** to arrange assessment by a first aider, and the calling of an ambulance if necessary. Trained first aiders are present in all parliamentary buildings.

Contact details for local first aiders are also held by the reception desk for each building and there is a full list on the intranet.

Injuries and other safety incidents, such as near misses, must be reported as soon as possible via Parliament’s online reporting system.

Suspect mail

External mail delivered to the Parliamentary Estate is screened for harmful contents but mail directed to your home, constituency or elsewhere, or accepted personally by you, is not screened and may therefore present more of a risk. If you suspect a letter or a parcel, do not handle it further – isolate the area. At Parliament call x3333, elsewhere call 999.

Bomb threats

In the event of a bomb threat, the police will seek to isolate the danger area and ensure the safety of you, your staff and the public. Security staff will direct people to identified internal or external safe areas. If you receive a bomb threat report the details immediately to x3333.

Firearms incidents

In the event of an incident involving firearms or other weapons, trained armed officers are posted in various strategic locations and will follow agreed plans to protect you, your staff and the public.
Chemical or biological agents
The police will take control of any incident involving possible chemical or biological agents and their instructions should be complied with immediately. Anyone potentially in contact with such agents should avoid contact with others until the nature of the agent has been established.
Decontamination arrangements

The emergency services have developed and tested plans for decontamination. If, for whatever reason, either or both Houses are unable to sit in their Chambers, alternative locations have been identified.

Emergency information – telephone numbers and website

An emergency information telephone number and website are available for advice in times of an emergency.

When you collect your photo-identity pass, the Pass Office will give you an emergency card stating the emergency telephone number and website, as well as the username and password. Please keep this card with you at all times.

In an emergency or major incident, information will be communicated by whatever means are available and most effective, including global emails, the intranet, the annunciator and the voice alarm system. If the usual lines of communication or access to the Parliamentary Estate are affected by an emergency, you can call the emergency information telephone number or log on to the emergency website to receive advice.

Further copies of the emergency information card can be obtained from the Pass Office.
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Setting up your office

Accommodation whips are responsible for allocating offices to Members. They may need to agree other moves to make a room available. Once this has been done, the House Service aims to have you up and running in your new office within a week. Accommodation Services will contact you to plan the details of your office (layout, furniture and telephone arrangements).

Experience shows that it is sensible to delay ordering computer equipment for use at Westminster until office allocation has taken place. You may wish to work in the Commons Library, which has PCs, laptop docking stations and Wi-Fi throughout the suite.

For any accommodation requests or problems, you should contact either the Members’ Accommodation Manager or staff at the reception desk in your building. If you experience technical problems – for example, with plumbing, ventilation or heating – you should report them to the Works Help Desk.

PLEASE NOTE: Use of office space as sleeping accommodation is not allowed. The Estate, with the exception of designated residential properties such as the Speaker’s House, is classified and certified as office accommodation and the life safety fire precautions in place meet the associated office based standards. If you are working at an hour when you would not usually be expected to be in your office, please inform security staff of your presence.

Computer services

The Parliamentary Digital Service, a joint department of both Houses of Parliament, provides technology and intranet services to Members and their staff. It is also responsible for the strategic direction of Parliament’s digital offering and the delivery and management of parliamentary digital platforms, including the website. The Parliamentary Digital Service has brought together the management of online and technology services, which were formerly provided by the Parliamentary Information Communications Technology department and the Web and Intranet Service.
You are offered a Parliamentary Network account, which will give you access to:

- An email account
- The internet and parliamentary intranet
- Secure personal storage space (OneDrive)
- Secure shared constituency storage space (SharePoint).

You will also receive Microsoft Office software, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook. Once you have your username, password and remote access code, you will be able to access your information from anywhere, using any internet enabled device.

**Computer equipment**

**Centrally provided computer equipment**

You are entitled to borrow computer equipment, for use during your time at Parliament, which must be returned when you cease to be a Member. You are allocated a computer equipment loan allowance, which you can use to order your choice of equipment through the online Computer Equipment Catalogue.

As a Member you will have been offered a loan iPad. The device comes supplied with a pre-enabled 4G SIM card for broadband on the go, whilst automatically connecting to Wi-Fi when on the Parliamentary Estate. Parliament will meet the standing charges for data used in the United Kingdom, but you will be invoiced for costs incurred while overseas. This device does not impact on your loan allowance but should also be returned when you cease to be a Member.

**Purchased equipment**

You can purchase your choice of further equipment through the Computer Equipment Catalogue using your credit card (including both personal and Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority issued cards – for which you may be entitled to reimbursement under the expenses scheme).
This equipment will remain your property even when you cease to be a Member.

The Computer Equipment Catalogue will be updated frequently and offers a range of PCs, laptops, tablet computers, printers and accessories. Equipment not purchased via the Computer Equipment Catalogue may be used to connect to some parliamentary services, but will not be supported by Parliament.

**Broadband**

You are entitled to three broadband services that allow access to the internet and the Parliamentary Network from constituency and home locations.

Wireless access to the Parliamentary Network is available across the Parliamentary Estate. Guest wireless access is also available and allows access to the internet using non-parliamentary supplied equipment.
**Computer advice and support**

Digital Support Online is the first point of contact for all your technology support needs. This online service is designed to make it quick and easy for you to contact us.

Digital Support Online enables you to:

- Log a request / report an issue
- Check the progress of your calls
- View the live status of services
- Search Knowledge Articles for help and advice.

**To access Digital Support Online, click on the icon on your parliamentary supplied computer desktop.**

The Digital Support Desk is the second point of contact for all your support needs. Staffed on the Parliamentary Estate, the friendly and experienced team is available to help you make the best use of, as well as assist with any problems regarding, the computer and telephony services that are provided.

The Digital Support Desk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (except on Christmas Day and Boxing Day).

**Parliamentary Digital Service contacts**

To discuss any of the above please call into the Digital Service Drop-in in Portcullis House or contact the Commons Members’ Computing Officer. In the event of loss or theft of equipment provided by Parliament contact the Digital Support Desk.
Computer training
One-to-one training is available from the Parliamentary Digital Service to familiarise yourself with the equipment and demonstrate how to use Microsoft Office products, including Outlook email and calendar facilities, and the intranet and internet.

For further information, assistance and advice on all computer services please contact the Digital Support Desk.

IPSA also provides brief introductory sessions on the online expenses system.

Westminster office
For any requests or problems about your office, or office furniture, contact your local Service Delivery Coordinator (at the reception desk in your building) or, alternatively, the Members’ Accommodation Manager.

Cleaning
Your office is cleaned by the Department of Facilities. Cleaning issues concerning your office should be made to the Service Delivery Coordinator responsible for the area. Issues concerning the cleaning of other areas should be referred to the Works Help Desk.

Employing staff
See page 44 (employment of staff) for information on the support available to you from the Members’ HR Advice Service, which handles human resources issues for Members of Parliament.
**Constituency office/working from home**

Centrally provided computer equipment acquired from the Computer Equipment Catalogue may be installed in a constituency or home office. The PCs and laptops supplied by Parliament come pre-configured and allow full and secure access to the Parliamentary Network over a broadband connection.

Other remote access services are available for you and further details of these are available on the computers and equipment intranet pages or by contacting the Digital Support Desk.

The Library also offers a range of services for your staff based in constituencies. For details contact the Library enquiry point.

**Telephones, voicemail and messaging services**

You have been allocated a telephone number which will remain yours until you leave Parliament, so you can publicise it as your contact number. The Parliamentary Digital Service will install up to four telephone lines for you in your Westminster office. The Parliamentary Telephone Directory is available on the intranet.

You can set up voicemail on your parliamentary extension numbers in Westminster; instructions are available on the intranet. Short telephone messages can be taken for you by the Operator Bureau. Information on other telecommunications services such as conference calls and directory enquiries are available on the intranet.

**Mobile phones, pagers and smartphones**

The use of handheld devices to keep up to date with emails is permitted in the Chamber and in committees provided that it causes no disturbance. All mobile phones, smartphones and tablets should be switched to silent mode in the Chamber and committees. Similarly they should not be used to make or receive calls in the Library or catering outlets.
**Post Offices**
A full range of post office counter services is available at the three Post Office counters on site, in Central Lobby, Members’ Lobby and Portcullis House. Information on opening hours and the services offered by the Post Office is available on the intranet.

**Mail**
You should contact the Postmaster and his staff in the main post office in Members’ Lobby to discuss how your mail should be managed.

All mail from the Royal Mail network is scanned at a remote location before delivery to Parliament. Any suspect packages received through the post should be reported immediately.

**Photocopying**
Digital photocopiers are provided around the Estate for use by you and your staff in support of your parliamentary duties. These are managed by the Department of Facilities.
**Stationery**

You and your staff may order stationery for your parliamentary or constituency offices from the online Banner stationery catalogue, available on the intranet.

House of Commons stationery is provided at public expense and must not be used for purposes that are not properly a charge on public funds. Should a complaint be made regarding a Member’s usage of bespoke stationery, it would be for the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards to investigate and rule upon. Guidance is available on the intranet.

A cash limited provision of House stationery and postage paid envelopes is provided by the House for Members’ parliamentary functions. The present annual limit is £9,000 per financial year per Member. This provision is in addition to any stationery and postage costs which Members may have reimbursed under IPSA’s Expenses Scheme.

**Environment**

Parliament is trying to reduce its environmental impact.

You and your staff are requested to be considerate of the environment when conducting your business.

Please refer to the environment pages on the intranet for information on Parliament’s environmental performance and targets, as well as current environmental initiatives. Information can also be found on using greener travel to work, energy saving tips and the recycling facilities which are available on the Parliamentary Estate.
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Your salary and expenses

Most financial matters are dealt with by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA). IPSA is the independent body which pays your salary and regulates and pays your costs and expenses. The MPs’ Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses, plus accompanying guidance to assist you in understanding how the rules should be applied, are available on IPSA’s website. Expenses are claimed using IPSA’s online system; IPSA is happy to help you as you begin to use it and will set up training sessions for you and your staff.

IPSA’s expenses system covers accommodation, office costs expenditure and travel, including between London and your constituency and within the constituency. It is advisable to read IPSA’s rules.

The Department of Finance is responsible for administering your pension and paying for certain costs relating to select committee and delegation travel.

You are eligible to be paid your salary once you have taken the oath or affirmed.

As a result of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010, Members – once they have taken the oath – are automatically deemed to be resident, ordinarily resident and domiciled in the UK for the purposes of income tax, capital gains tax and inheritance tax. If you need more advice, please contact HMRC.

Pensions

You are automatically enrolled into the Members’ pension scheme the day after your election. The pension scheme is part of the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund (PCPF) which is governed by a Board of Trustees. For further information please refer to the intranet or contact the Secretariat in the House of Commons Pensions Unit.
Travel

Travel and subsistence claims may be made for the costs of travel and travel-related subsistence expenditure undertaken by you and which is necessarily incurred in the performance of your parliamentary functions.

Further information on costs which can be claimed can be found in the MPs’ Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses, produced and administered by IPSA.

Parliamentary Travel Office

The arrangements for journeys and overnight stays can be made using the Parliamentary Travel Office, which provides business and personal travel services to Members of both Houses.

The office is operated by Chambers Travel Management and is overseen by the Department of HR and Change.

Chambers provides a comprehensive range of services, including air and domestic and international rail ticketing; hotel booking, both in the UK and abroad; currency exchange; and passport and visa services.

In many cases the office will be able to offer specially negotiated discounts on fares, in particular on air travel, and on the costs of hotels, including a number convenient for Westminster.

Bookings can be made in person, via telephone or email, or using online booking tools.

Travel Office staff can also help you create a traveller profile (including the setting up of a proxy to book travel on your behalf), assist you in assessing your travel patterns, and identify the most convenient and cost-effective way of travelling.
The House Service pays carbon offsets for parliamentary travel booked through the Travel Office. While you may book your travel in other ways, only bookings through the Travel Office benefit from the available discounts and carbon offsets.

The Travel Office is located on the lower ground floor, Palace of Westminster, approached by Star Chamber Court. The office is sign-posted with access down the stairs from the Court. Access from the Members’ Lobby is also possible.

**Travel Office opening times**

- Monday  9.30am to 5.30pm (5pm in recess)
- Tuesday  9am to 5.30pm (5pm in recess)
- Wednesday  9am to 6pm (5pm in recess)
- Thursday  9am to 7pm (5pm in recess)
- Friday  9am to 5pm

**Insurances**

The following insurance policies have been arranged by the House Service so that you are covered whilst undertaking your parliamentary responsibilities:

- Travel* and Personal Accident
- Employer and Public Liability
- Professional Indemnity.

*Overseas travel only

Please check the level and nature of cover by seeking advice from the Department of HR and Change before making any independent arrangements. A guide is also available on the intranet.

Members are also covered for a death in service payment from the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund (PCPF).
Employment Practice Liability insurance
You can protect yourself against personal loss as a result of a claim in respect of wrongful employment practice (which may or may not lead to an Employment Tribunal) by purchasing Employment Practice Liability insurance.

The premium for the insurance, and the excess if there is a claim, can be claimed from IPSA and does not require prior approval. You should contact IPSA for the joining form and instructions. Alternatively, you may purchase this cover independently and reclaim the costs from IPSA in the usual way.

Once you have purchased the cover, you must contact the insurers as soon as you are aware of any potential claim against you.

If you do not purchase the cover or do not go through the insurers, IPSA will not allow any claims for legal representation or settlements.

The Members’ HR Advice Service can provide you with information about the Employment Practice Liability insurance and answer any queries you may have about it.

Death of a Member
If a Member dies, the House Service appoints a Contact Officer to help his or her family and staff in their dealings with House matters. Further information is available on the intranet.
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**Employing staff**

Members of Parliament are individual employers who staff their offices much as any small business does. Under the standards and rules and within your budget ceiling, this gives you the ability to set up your office or offices in the way that works best for you. There is no single model. However, as for all small businesses, there are good, and sometimes not so good, ways of organising and managing your office and the people you take on.

**Members’ HR Advice Service**

The Members’ HR Advice Service is a dedicated service to Members of Parliament and advises Members on all employment and HR related issues. In doing so, the Service aims to promote good employment practice and provide sound and up to date advice and information on employment and human resources issues to Members of Parliament.

The Members’ HR Advice Service is available by telephone or email, and can meet with you on the Parliamentary Estate or via Skype. The services provided include:

- Formal guidance on key areas, e.g. contracts of employment, recruitment, restructures, redundancy, maternity and paternity rights, working time regulations, performance management, sick absence and other employment matters.

- Ad hoc confidential advice service on human resources issues, and guidance on aspects of employment law and best practice, including template letters.

- Induction and employment training for Members of Parliament and their staff.

- Information about the latest developments on employment law relevant to Members of Parliament and their staff.

- Development of employment policy and procedures for Members of Parliament.
Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA)

Before recruiting a member of staff to undertake parliamentary work, you should read IPSA’s rules. IPSA is the independent body responsible for providing model contracts and job descriptions, setting salary scales and providing you with a budget to pay your staff. IPSA also runs the payroll service for you and your staff.

Security clearance for Members’ staff

The Pass Access Unit carries out Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) pre-employment checks on staff of Members from both Houses. This standardises the checking procedures for everyone with access to the Parliamentary Estate and its Network. The standard is designed to address problems of identity fraud, illegal working and deception, thus helping to protect the House’s assets and reputation. The check involves verifying an individual’s identity, nationality and immigration status and employment/educational history over the past three years.

A Counter Terrorist Check (CTC) is also required prior to obtaining a parliamentary pass and/or access to the Parliamentary Network.

All staff must be vetted prior to working on the Estate.

Pensions

Members’ staff are contractually enrolled by IPSA in the MPs’ Staff Pension Scheme. This scheme meets the requirements of the Government’s automatic enrolment legislation.

Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 have implications for Members as employers. Advice on these issues can be requested from the fire safety team.
Training opportunities for your staff

The House of Commons Learning and Development team offers training services for your staff.

The training activities offered currently include:

- Induction sessions and a tour of key services. These sessions are most relevant to new Members’ staff working on the Parliamentary Estate and provide essential information to assist them in their role and enable them to help you with your work.

- For Members’ staff based in constituencies there are regional events organised by the Central Communications Team.

- Knowledge and skills based classroom and online courses. These are a mixture of classroom courses, based in Westminster and regionally, and online learning on subjects such as:
  - Immigration law
  - Mental health awareness
  - Welfare benefits
  - Personal Independence Payments
  - Communications skills
  - The House Knowledge programme
  - Minute taking
  - Diversity and inclusion
  - Information management
  - Managing performance and appraisals
  - Health and safety
  - Fire safety (Members also have access to this module).

All online courses are available on the Learning Management System ‘Act’ and staff can request places on classroom courses on the same system.

Automatic access to Act is available for all Members’ staff who are logged into a parliamentary machine and on the Parliamentary Network at Westminster, or via VPN or Citrix for those in the constituencies.
Courses are free of charge to those staff who are paid from staffing expenses. The approval of the relevant Member or line manager is required.

**Commons Library training**
Free training is also provided by the House of Commons Library. Courses include:

- Internet search: tools and techniques
- Library intranet pages
- Media and parliamentary sources on the intranet and internet
- Parliamentary Search.

Your staff can use the Library facilities in the Derby Gate building.

**IPSA training**
The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) also runs training for you and your staff. More information is available on IPSA’s website.

**w4mp.org**
The Working for an MP website is funded by the House of Commons and provides a wide range of useful information for Members’ staff, including guides to good practice, details of training courses, news, notices and a selection of job vacancies.

**Threat of legal action**
The House Service has arranged a Professional Indemnity insurance policy that covers you when carrying out your parliamentary duties.

Should you receive a threat of legal action relating to your work as a Member, you should immediately call the Department of HR and Change on x5732. Do not wait until an action is issued and do not respond directly.

Disputes between you and one of your employees should be referred in the first instance to the Members’ HR Advice Service.
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CHAMBER BUSINESS

Election of Speaker
The date of the new Parliament assembling is set by proclamation. The first business when a new Parliament meets is the election of a Speaker, in which all Members may take part. If the incumbent Speaker is returned at the General Election and wishes to stand for re-election, that decision is made immediately. If there is no returning Speaker wishing to stand again, or the House votes against the incumbent Speaker, a contested election by exhaustive ballot must take place to choose a new Speaker.

Swearing-in
On the day after the Speaker has been elected, the Speaker-elect, and any Members who wish, go with Black Rod to the Lords. On returning from the Lords the Speaker takes the oath of allegiance and then Members come forward one by one to swear or affirm as required by law.

Mobile phones and other electronic equipment must be switched to silent before you enter the Chamber.

Any Member taking part in proceedings after the election of the Speaker without having sworn or affirmed would be deprived automatically of their membership of the House.

Members are called to take the oath or affirm in order of seniority, first the Speaker, followed by the Father of the House (the Member who has served in the Commons longest without a break), then the Prime Minister and other members of the Cabinet. Other Members are then called (by the Parliament of first entry).

The Speaker announces the timings at the start of proceedings; as the swearing-in continues the annunciators around the House will display the relevant details (for example: TAKING THE OATH: MEMBERS FIRST ELECTED IN 2001-2005 PARLIAMENT).
You should be aware that the swearing-in is a televised formal proceeding, and that anything said may be picked up by the microphones.

**Oath or affirmation**

You should decide in advance whether to take an oath or to make an affirmation.

You take the oath or affirm by the Despatch Box on the Government side and then sign the test roll. The Clerk of the House calls out your name, and the Speaker shakes hands with you as you pass the Chair.

**Sacred texts**

The following holy books are available at the Table for Members who wish to take the oath: the New Testament; the Old Testament (in English and Hebrew); the Gita; the Koran; the Granth; the Welsh Bible; and the Gaelic Bible. As you come to take the oath you should indicate to the Clerk which holy book you require. Please let the Clerk of the House know in advance if you require another scripture so that it may be provided for you.

You are asked to respect the protocols surrounding the handling of the Koran, the Gita and the Granth. Please do not touch these holy books unless you intend to use them to take the oath.

**Languages other than English**

The oath or affirmation must by law be taken or made initially in English, but you are entitled, if you wish, to follow this with an oath or affirmation in Welsh, Cornish or Scottish Gaelic. Oath/affirmation cards in these languages are available at the time of swearing-in from the Clerk at the Despatch Box.
Sample signatures
House officials will be behind the Speaker’s Chair to collect your sample signature so that it can be easily identified when you sign House papers. You will also be asked to complete a form showing the full name by which you wish to be known in a range of House documents and other details (for example, email addresses to which you want answers to Written Questions and other material to be sent).

Registration of interests
After you join the House, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards will write to you to explain the requirements of the Code of Conduct, including your obligation to disclose your interests.

The purpose of the Register of Members’ Financial Interests is to provide information about any financial interest or other benefit you have which might reasonably be thought by others to influence your actions or words as an MP.

You must register your interests within one month of your election, even if you will have a nil return in the Register. After that, the House requires you to register any changes within 28 days. Updates to the Register are published every two weeks during sitting periods.

In addition, from the time you take your seat, the House requires you to draw attention to your interests (whether or not they are registered), for example, in the Chamber, on almost every occasion when they are relevant: that is, if someone else might reasonably think that they influence what you say or do.

Registration forms and further information are available on the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards’ pages on the intranet and the Register of Financial Interests is published on the Standards and Financial Interests page on Parliament’s external website.
Other Registers of Interests

There are also Registers of Interests for Members’ staff, All-Party Parliamentary Groups and journalists. Information on the Register of All-Party Parliamentary Groups is also included in this Handbook on page 70.

Sitting times

The normal sitting hours of the House are:

Monday 2.30pm to 10pm*
Tuesday and Wednesday 11.30am to 7pm*
Thursday 9.30am to 5pm*

*Usual end of main business, generally followed by the half hour adjournment debate

The House sits on 13 Fridays in a normal Session to consider Private Members’ Bills and very occasionally on other Fridays. The sitting times on a Friday are 9.30am to 2.30pm followed by the half-hour adjournment debate.

The time at which main business is concluded is subject to change, depending on the business of the House.

A calendar showing sitting days for the current session will be made available online and from the Vote Office.
**Getting called**

The following are the conventions and courtesies of the House which successive Speakers have reiterated:

If you wish to speak in a debate in the Chamber, or in a 90-minute or Thursday afternoon debate in Westminster Hall, you should write to the Speaker in advance. If you have not written in, you may still seek to take part in a debate by approaching the Chair or trying to catch the Chair’s eye during the debate, but those who have written in advance will usually be called first. Adding your name to a notice of Motion or amendment is not enough to indicate an intention to speak: even if your name is on a Motion you should still inform the Speaker’s Office if you wish to take part in a debate.

Once you have written in to request to speak, you are under an obligation to turn up in the Chamber for the start of the debate and be present for most of it. Debates in the Chamber should be an exchange of views. If you are hoping to be called to speak in a debate you must be present for the opening speeches. After you have spoken you must remain in the Chamber for at least the next two speeches and you must return to hear the winding-up speeches.

Members who fail to observe these courtesies will be given a lower or no priority on the next occasion they seek to speak. Where there are no formal wind-ups (for example, on backbench business), you must still be present for a reasonable proportion of the debate, to hear any ministerial contributions, and you must also be present for the conclusion of the debate.
The list of those who have given notice is used by the Chair to calculate the length of any time limit on speeches. If circumstances prevent you from attending a debate for which you have indicated a wish to speak, you should inform the Speaker’s Office at the earliest opportunity of your wish to withdraw your name, or speak directly to the occupant of the Chair on the day in question.

Selection of speakers in debate is at the discretion of the occupant of the Chair. The Chair cannot, however, predict precisely when you might expect to be called, and approaching the Chair for advice on this question is generally unfruitful. The objective at all times is to give all Members a fair opportunity to take part in debate. The Speaker and Deputy Speakers will take account of relevant experience or expertise (in or outside the House, including on select committees where particularly relevant), Members’ expressed interests or constituency involvement and the number of times Members have previously spoken (or have sought to speak but not been called) during the Session.

The Speaker or Deputy Speakers may impose time limits on speeches in order to give as many Members as possible the opportunity to contribute to a debate. It will not always be possible for every Member who has indicated a wish to be called to speak.

You should write in advance to indicate a wish to speak on the second or third readings of Bills: for Committee of the whole House, report stages or consideration of Lords Amendments it is not necessary to do so.
**Question Time and statements**

Before Question Time or ministerial statements, you should only write to the Speaker seeking to be called when you wish to draw to his attention a particular fact (for example, a constituency connection or personal interest), which you think should be taken into account. Members who submit generalised requests to be called will be given no preference.

A request to be called at Prime Minister’s Questions should be submitted only in the most exceptional circumstances. An example might be where a human tragedy has taken place in the constituency. Generalised requests to be called will be counterproductive.

Members with Oral Questions should not leave the Chamber until supplementary questions on their Question have ended.

Members seeking to be called following a ministerial statement, Urgent Question or the Business Question must be present for the whole of the opening statement.

The Speaker’s Office keeps comprehensive records of Members’ success and failure in being called in debate, following ministerial statements and at Prime Minister’s Questions. These statistics are always taken into account on a subsequent occasion.

**Speaking in debate**

Brevity in debate will give other Members a greater opportunity to speak and increase your chances of being called early on the next occasion on which you seek to speak. Opening speeches should be of a length which takes account of the numbers wishing to participate and the time available.
You may intervene briefly in someone else’s speech, but only if the Member who has the floor gives way. If the Member makes clear that they are not giving way, you should resume your seat. An intervention should relate directly to what has just been said and not be a short speech of its own. You should not intervene unless you have been present for a reasonable portion of the debate; it is not acceptable to enter the Chamber and immediately seek to intervene in a speech.

Particularly where there are time limits in operation, you should be conscious of the impact of multiple interventions on the chances of others getting the opportunity to participate. Excessive interventions may prejudice your chances of being called to speak earlier rather than later in the debate; in a debate where there is great pressure on time, this could mean that you are not called to speak at all.

To be called to speak you have to be seated within the formal limits of the Chamber (the Chair does not call Members sitting on the cross-benches below the bar).

You may refer to notes but should not read your speech – not only does it stifle debate but it makes it harder for you to respond to interventions.

You should always address the House through the Chair. “You” means the Chair. Accordingly, other Members should not be addressed as “you”, but should be referred to as:

- “the honourable Member for [constituency]” (for a Member on the opposite benches)
- “my honourable friend” (for a Member on your side of the House)
- or perhaps “the honourable Member opposite” (where the context makes clear to whom you are referring).
Note that:

- Privy Counsellors are “right honourable”
- Ministers may be referred to by office or as “the Minister”
- “Learned” (for QCs) and “gallant” (for those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces) have largely fallen out of use. The House of Lords may be referred to as “the House of Lords” – there is no requirement to call it “the other place”.

You should not refer in a speech or intervention to people in the public galleries (including civil servants in the officials’ box), although it is acceptable to refer to people in general terms such as those “who have come to Westminster today”. If there is some exceptional circumstance which you feel may justify a more specific reference (for example, to the presence in the Gallery of a bereaved family), you should seek, privately and in advance, the permission of the Chair to make it.

Adjournment debates in the Chamber and Tuesday/Wednesday Westminster Hall debates

Applications for these debates are made through the Table Office. Application forms are available in hard copy in the Table Office or on the intranet. Application forms must be brought to the Table Office by you, include your original signature or be emailed from your account.

Bear in mind that not every department is available to answer Westminster Hall debates every week; you will find the rota in the Announcements section at the back of the Order Paper.

The deadline is 10pm (or the rise of the House, whichever is earlier) on Mondays for the following week’s Westminster Hall debates, and 7pm (or the rise of the House, whichever is earlier) on Wednesdays for adjournment debates. The allocation of debates is done by the Speaker’s Office and the outcome is known by lunchtime the day after the deadline.
Backbench business debates

Backbench Members are able to apply to lead a debate on a subject of their choosing in the Chamber or in Westminster Hall on backbench days. Applications are made to the Backbench Business Committee.

Members are asked to submit a written application in advance and then attend a meeting of the Committee to present it in person. The application form (which includes guidance notes) and more details are available on the Committee’s webpage.

Chamber conduct

Parliamentary language

You should always bear in mind Erskine May’s advice in *Parliamentary Practice* that “good temper and moderation are the characteristics of parliamentary language”.

There is no hard and fast list of unparliamentary words. Whether something said is a breach of order depends on the context. The Speaker deprecates personal remarks about other Members. Any abusive or insulting language used in debate will be required to be withdrawn immediately. Accusations of deliberate falsehood, if seriously alleged, would be a matter of privilege and may only be made on a substantive Motion after writing privately to the Speaker to obtain permission to raise a matter of privilege. Any such accusation made in the course of other proceedings would be disorderly and must be withdrawn.
The privilege of freedom of speech in debate – that is, the protection against civil action or criminal sanction for what is said in proceedings of the House – allows the House to conduct debates without fear of outside interference. But it is a freedom which should be exercised responsibly, in the public interest and taking into account the interests of others outside the House. You should research carefully and take advice before exercising this freedom in sensitive or individual cases.

**Dress**

As with the language you use, the way in which you dress should also demonstrate respect for the House and for its central position in the life of the nation. There is no exact dress code. Convention has been that for men a jacket and tie is expected; for women the equivalent level of formality should be observed.

The ostentatious display of badges, brand names, slogans or other forms of advertising of either commercial or non-commercial causes is not in order.

Members who fail to show respect to the House will not be called to speak by the Chair, and if they show flagrant disrespect in their manner of dress they may be asked to withdraw from the Chamber.
Courtesies and conventions in the Chamber

On entering or leaving the Chamber, you should give a slight bow to the Chair, as a gesture of respect to the House. The same courtesy should be extended to the Chair in Westminster Hall and the Chair of a Public Bill, Delegated Legislation or European Committee.

You should not cross the line of sight between the Speaker and the Member who has the floor or, at Question Time, between a Member asking a question and the Minister responding to him or her.

When the Chair stands, all other Members should resume their seats (or be standing outside the speaking limits of the Chamber – beyond the bar or behind the Chair) and be silent.

When the Chair is preparing to collect the voices for the second time during a division and name the tellers, other Members should not pass between the Chair and the tellers until the tellers have departed for the lobbies.

When the tellers are ready to announce the result of a division, Members should either resume their seats or stand outside the speaking limits of the Chamber (beyond the bar or behind the Chair). The result should be heard in silence.

The House has agreed to the use in the Chamber of hand-held electronic devices provided that they cause no disturbance and are not used in such a way as to impair decorum. All such devices must be in silent mode. The taking of telephone calls or listening to voicemails in the Chamber is prohibited. You may use electronic devices in place of notes as an aide memoire in debate. Electronic devices may not be used to film or make audio recordings in or around the Chamber.
When listening to a debate you should not read books or newspapers or ostentatiously devote yourself to your handheld electronic device. Laptops, newspapers and briefcases should not be brought into the Chamber. Food and drink should not be consumed in the Chamber, though water is permitted.

You should face the Chair when addressing the House. It is discourteous to turn your back on the Chair. It also means your words may be lost. The television cameras and microphones covering proceedings for broadcast have been placed to give the clearest coverage of Members whilst addressing the House through the Chair, and the Official Report (Hansard) relies on the feed from these microphones to record what you say accurately.

Members should remember that the TV cameras do not focus only on the Member speaking but also broadcast occasional reaction shots during debates and Question Time.

From the time you are elected you must follow the rules of the House on disclosing your interests in the Chamber and on other occasions, even if you have not yet completed a Register entry. You should declare your interests, subject to the rules, on any occasion when someone else might reasonably consider them to influence your actions or words as an MP.

**Courtesy to and from other Members**

Members should notify colleagues whenever:

- They intend to refer to them in the Chamber
- They table Questions which specifically affect colleagues’ constituencies
- They intend to visit colleagues’ constituencies (except on purely private visits).

All reasonable efforts should be taken to notify the other Member and failing to do so is regarded by colleagues as very discourteous.
Maiden speech
You should give notice of your intention to make a maiden speech to the Speaker’s Office. You will usually be called early in a debate to make your maiden speech, and will be heard without interruption. You may request a presentation copy of the Official Report of your maiden speech. You may table Oral and Written Questions, Early Day Motions (EDMs) and amendments, take part in committees, or present a Petition or a Bill, even if you have not yet spoken in the Chamber. For further information, contact the Table Office.

Library staff can provide information about the history of your constituency or statistics for it, as well as the maiden speeches of your predecessors.

Advice on the work of the House
The staff of the Department of Chamber and Committee Services support every aspect of the business of the House and its committees, such as in the legislative process, providing the staff of select committees, and advising on parliamentary Questions. They will advise you in strict confidence and they can advise you not only on the rules and practices of the House but on how you can achieve your objectives within the rules.

House of Commons officials are not civil servants; they are employed by the House, not the Government. They are politically strictly impartial. They will not always volunteer information without being asked, since in some circumstances this could amount to taking sides.
For advice on the work of the House contact:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of work</th>
<th>Responsible office</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjournment debates</td>
<td>Table Office</td>
<td>Off the corridor behind the Speaker’s Chair</td>
<td>x3302/3303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bills</td>
<td>Public and Private Bill Office</td>
<td>Third floor, above the Chamber</td>
<td>x6758 (Public Bills) x6008 (Private Bills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents, provision of</td>
<td>Vote Office</td>
<td>Members’ Lobby and elsewhere on the Estate</td>
<td>x3631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Day Motions (EDMs)</td>
<td>Table Office</td>
<td>Off the corridor behind the Speaker’s Chair</td>
<td>x3302/3303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European scrutiny</td>
<td>European Scrutiny Committee office</td>
<td>14 Tothill Street</td>
<td>x5467/3292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petitions</td>
<td>Journal Office</td>
<td>Third floor, above the Chamber</td>
<td>x3310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural advice</td>
<td>Table Office</td>
<td>Off the corridor behind the Speaker’s Chair</td>
<td>x3302/3303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions (Oral or Written)</td>
<td>Table Office</td>
<td>Off the corridor behind the Speaker’s Chair</td>
<td>x3302/3303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations with other Parliaments</td>
<td>Overseas Office</td>
<td>At the end of Committee Corridor, and 7 Millbank</td>
<td>x5752/4494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select committees</td>
<td>Committee Office</td>
<td>On the corridor behind the Speaker’s Chair, and 14 Tothill Street</td>
<td>x5675/1366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory instruments</td>
<td>Journal Office</td>
<td>Third floor, above the Chamber</td>
<td>x3361</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table Office, Public and Private Bill Office, Journal Office and Committee Office are each open each sitting day until the rise of the House.

The authoritative guide to procedure is Erskine May's Treatise on the Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usages of Parliament, usually known as Erskine May.
The Clerk Assistant, who is also the Director General of the Department of Chamber and Committee Services, and the Principal Clerk of the Table Office, whose offices are in the corridor behind the Speaker's Chair, welcome the opportunity to talk to you, especially if you are a new Member, and to identify the right people to help you on particular aspects of business and procedure.

**Oral and Written Questions**

Government departments answer Oral Questions every five weeks according to a rota which is available from the Vote Office and is on the intranet bulletin board. You may table one Question to each department answering – subject to a maximum of two on a single day.

Questions for Oral and Written Answer may be submitted in the Table Office, which also prepares the daily Order Paper and receives parliamentary Questions and Motions. The clerks in the Table Office advise on how to bring Questions and Motions into conformity within the rules of the House, and can provide advice on any aspect of procedure, or direct you to the appropriate specialist.

Questions may be tabled in person at the Table Office, by post or electronically via your e-tabling account. Your staff may hand in signed Questions on your behalf.

The Library can help with any difficulties finding Answers to Oral and Written Questions, and any documents associated with the Answers such as Deposited Papers.
Amendments to Bills and Private Members’ Bills

To table an amendment to a Bill, or introduce a Private Members’ Bill, you should contact the Public Bill Office. The clerks in that office can advise on all aspects of amendments, how Bills proceed through the House of Commons and what stage a particular Bill has reached. Alternatively, the Parliament website contains all published House material relating to each Bill.

Specialist advice is available for Members wishing to introduce a Private Member’s Bill (Ballot Bills, Presentation Bills and Ten Minute Rule Bills).

Amendments may be discussed and tabled in person in the Public Bill Office (third floor above the Chamber – take the lifts from Members’ Lobby or behind the Speaker’s Chair). You may ‘introduce’ an assistant by bringing them to the Public Bill Office and they will then be able to discuss and table amendments on your behalf. You may also drop off amendments in the Table Office in person or, if they are signed, send them to the Public Bill Office by internal or external post. It is also possible, by arrangement, to submit amendments via email.

Public Bill Office hours of opening
(the ‘closing’ times given are the deadlines each day for tabling amendments):

- **Monday**: 10am to rise of the House
- **Tuesday**: 9.30am to rise of the House
- **Wednesday**: 9.30am to rise of the House
- **Thursday**: 9.30am to rise of the House
- **Friday (sitting)**: 9am to rise of the House
- **Friday (non-sitting)**: 11am to 3pm
- **Recess* ‘Printing Days’**: 11am to 4.30pm

*During recesses a Public Bill Office clerk is always contactable via the Duty Clerk on x3320
**Hansard reporting**

Hansard (the Official Report) is the full and accurate report of proceedings in the Chamber and Westminster Hall and General Committees of the House and an important archival resource. Hansard is “substantially” the verbatim report of proceedings which means that, while nothing is left out that adds to the meaning of a Member’s speech, repetitions and redundancies may be omitted as are mistakes that would be obvious to someone listening to the debate.

To help Hansard fulfil this role it is important that you pass any speaking notes to Hansard staff when requested. Please open all Hansard envelopes addressed to you as they may contain separate queries, the answers to which will help Hansard to report your speech more accurately.

Hansard staff will inform you by note when speeches will be ready for checking. Before they are sent for printing, speeches may be read in the Assistant Editors’ room, Lower Press Gallery, mezzanine floor, or they can be emailed to you for checking (there is a shorter time window in which to check emailed speeches than if you go to the office in person). You should check speeches and suggest alterations yourself as Hansard cannot accept alterations from your staff. Errors that Hansard staff have made may be corrected and editorial changes suggested. Please note that, like all major publications, Hansard has a house style on which, in the interests of consistency, searchability and ease of reading, its editorial staff will generally insist.

The reports of proceedings in the Chamber and Westminster Hall are published on the Parliament website about three hours after the end of Question Time or a speech. The reports of proceedings in committees take longer to be published.
Select committees

The House establishes select committees to scrutinise the Government and conduct inquiries into matters of general interest. The best known type are departmental select committees; each examines the work of a specific department, looking at policy, administration and spending, as well as public bodies associated with the department.

The House also appoints a European Scrutiny Committee, which has particular responsibility for scrutinising European Union legislative proposals and other documents, and recommending the most significant for debate.

Membership of committees reflects the membership of the House. Chairs of most committees are elected by the whole House, and members of most are elected by secret ballot from within their parties.

Most committees publish information on Parliament’s website. For queries about a select committee report or other aspects of a committee’s work, contact the clerk of the relevant committee or the Committee Office.
Groups and assemblies

All-Party Parliamentary Groups

All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) are cross-party groups of parliamentarians who share particular interests, and have chosen to abide by the rules relating to the registration of APPGs and disclosure of their interests.

In order to use the title All-Party Parliamentary Group, a Group must be open to all Members of both Houses, regardless of party affiliation, and must satisfy the rules agreed by the House.

The advantages of registration as an APPG are:

- It is explicit that the Group is committed to abiding by the principles of transparency which underpin these rules.
- Members of the public can establish whether or not a group of Members has registered as an APPG.
- Registered APPGs are entitled to use the term “parliamentary” to describe their activities, and to use the APPG Portcullis badge.
- APPGs can publish details of their meetings on the All-Party Notices.
- APPGs are able to book rooms on the Parliamentary Estate.

The Register of All-Party Parliamentary Groups, which is maintained by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, is the definitive list of such Groups. It contains the financial and other information about Groups which the House has decided should be published. The Register is published on the Parliament website and updated approximately every six weeks.
The Chair and registered contact of a Group must register information about it within 28 days of any change. You can find out more about the Register and the relevant rules from the webpages of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.

**International parliamentary assemblies**
Delegations of Members from both Houses attend three international assemblies:

- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- NATO Parliamentary Assembly

The delegations are selected on the basis of consultation between the parties and reflect the party composition in the Commons. The delegations are supported by staff in the Parliamentary Assemblies Section of the Overseas Office.

**Interparliamentary bodies**
There are also UK arms of international organisations that promote contacts between parliamentarians in different countries.

**Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK**
The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) UK undertakes international parliamentary outreach with Commonwealth legislatures on behalf of and involving Members of both Houses of Parliament.
British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

The British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (BGIPU) is responsible for the UK Parliament’s engagement with the global organisation of national parliaments, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) based in Geneva, and bilateral engagement with counterparts in IPU member parliaments.

British-American Parliamentary Group

The British-American Parliamentary Group (BAPG) promotes exchanges and understanding between British parliamentarians and US political and other leading figures.

British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly

The British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA) brings together Members of the UK and Irish Parliaments, the devolved legislatures and the Crown Dependencies to develop understanding between elected representatives and explore issues of mutual concern.

Office of Speaker’s Counsel

The Office of Speaker’s Counsel (OSC) provides legal advice to the Speaker and all departments of the House. The Office comprises nine professionally qualified lawyers and an office manager, all based in 7 Millbank.

The work of the OSC falls into three main areas:

- General legal advice
- Scrutiny of domestic legislation
- Scrutiny of European legislation.
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Parliamentary papers

Parliamentary documents produced by the House are available online on the Parliament website. The Order Paper, Hansard and many other documents are also available via apps.

The Vote Office can supply you with parliamentary and Government documents (including EU documents). Documents for the current Session are usually available on request; older documents may be ordered. The main office is situated directly below the Members’ Lobby outlet, on the lower ground floor of the Palace – the entrance is opposite the cash machines near the Terrace Cafeteria. Other offices are located on the Estate.

You are entitled to one copy of each of the following parliamentary papers on request:

- Papers in the ‘Vote bundle’, which includes the daily summary agenda and order of business
- Daily Hansard
- Bills, Acts and secondary legislation
- Command papers and House of Commons papers, including those produced by Government departments.

Extra copies of some documents may be provided by the Vote Office on request.

The Vote Office can help you to find the documents you need, including Government publications. Daily topic-specific updates and a weekly list of the publications received by the Vote Office are available from Vote Office issue points, on the intranet and via internal or external post.

You can also use Parliamentary Search to find parliamentary publications, debates, votes, and other information relevant to the work of both Houses.
**Progress on Bills**
A list of Public and Private Bills before Parliament, with links to debates, the text of the Bills, explanatory notes and the latest amendment papers, is available online.

You can obtain a list of Public Bills before Parliament, showing their progress, at the Vote Office and on the intranet.

**House of Commons Library**
The House of Commons Library supports the House, its committees and individual Members and Members’ staff through the provision of research, information and analysis services. All work for individual Members is provided in support of their parliamentary duties on an impartial and confidential basis.

The Library provides information and analysis to assist you with all aspects of your work: speeches, committee work, media appearances, constituency issues and casework, overseas visits or general matters of public interest. A highly qualified and experienced team of subject specialists offers a unique service to support your democratic role.

**Enquiry services**
The Library can help you with advice, information and analysis on the full range of subjects of interest to Parliament. For example, you can ask for briefings on specific issues of international, national or local importance; statistics on economic or social issues; general information (but not specific legal advice) on issues affecting constituents; and copies of documentation such as newspaper articles and speeches.

The Library will work with you to supply a response in a way that best suits your needs. All responses to enquiries are impartial and confidential. To find the relevant specialist to deal with your enquiry you should call the Library enquiry point or ask for a copy of the subject specialists’ directory.
Briefings
The Library’s pre-prepared briefings can help you understand hundreds of topics of current parliamentary interest. Briefings directly relevant to the current business of the House are collated on the ‘Useful briefings….’ page of the intranet. Other topical briefings are listed on the Library homepage.

The ‘Briefing Paper’ series covers all major pieces of legislation, other major policy areas, topical issues and FAQs. These are available on the intranet, website and as printed documents.

‘Debate packs’ are collections of parliamentary and other material relevant to non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall. These are available on the intranet and as printed documents.

Printed versions are available from the Members’ Library and other locations around the Estate.

Online services
The Library provides a wide range of services on the intranet:

- Statistical resources, including constituency data
- Current awareness services
- A toolkit for caseworkers
- Access to a range of publications including newspapers, periodicals and other high quality information services
- An online catalogue of books and other holdings
- Parliamentary Search, the database and search engine, which enables you to find parliamentary publications, debates, votes, and other information relevant to the work of the two Houses.
Training and support

The Library also offers a range of training. This can help you with finding and managing information, including using the internet more effectively, and making full use of the Library’s online services. Details of training courses are available via the Training Delivery Team.

To book an introduction to the Library and its resources, please call the Library enquiry point. You can also book one-to-one training sessions for guidance in using the Library’s online resources.

Library subject specialists lead talks on topics of parliamentary interest. These are offered most weeks when the House is sitting and will be regularly advertised.

Library and reference services

Reading rooms in the Members’ Library (for Members only) and Derby Gate (Members and Members’ staff) provide areas where you and your staff can work quietly and use the wide range of parliamentary and reference resources available.

Use the Library’s reading rooms for:

- Placing Library enquiries, including research requests; tracking down parliamentary and Deposited Papers, debates, parliamentary Questions, Early Day Motions, Bills, and official publications; as well as checking the progress of legislation
- Access to hard copy and online press material, newspapers and periodicals, and a wide range of reference works such as maps and biographies
- A quiet area to read and work, including charging points for phones and tablets, laptop docking stations, networked PCs and Wi-Fi
- Hands-on help with using information resources.

Library Training Delivery Team x2937
librarytraining@parliament.uk
intranet.parliament.uk/commons-library-training-and-skills

Subject specialist talks
intranet.parliament.uk/commons-library-talks

Library enquiry point x3666
hclibrary@parliament.uk
Members’ Library:
On the riverfront opposite the Members’ Tea Room
Derby Gate Library:
ground floor,
1 Derby Gate
**Library Loans Service**

The Library has an extensive collection of books available for loan to you in connection with your parliamentary duties. The loans service is situated in the Members’ Library. The Library also provides an inter-library loans service, which includes books and journal articles, and can also help you to obtain other material such as recordings of news and current affairs programmes.

**Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST)**

POST is Parliament’s in-house source of scientific advice. It is an office of both Houses of Parliament, overseen by a Board of Members of both Houses and external experts.

POST delivers a number of services for Members:

**Written briefings**

POST provides balanced and accessible overviews of research from across the natural, physical and social sciences, engineering and technology, placing findings in a policy context for parliamentary use. It identifies trends in science, technology, society and policy, and analyses their implications for parliamentarians. This work often takes the form of ‘POSTnotes’ – briefings on public policy issues based on reviews of the research literature and interviews with stakeholders from across academia, industry, Government and the third sector that are peer reviewed by external experts.

POST welcomes suggestions from Members on future topics for POSTnotes, and can also provide briefings for select committees on request (for on-demand briefings for individual Members, please consult the House of Commons Library). Suggestions for POSTnotes may be made to one of POST’s Board members or to the Director.
Briefings are available via the parliamentary intranet, the POST website or in hardcopy from the Members’ Library and other locations around the Estate. Members can also join POST’s mailing list to receive new publications either in electronic form or hardcopy.

**Events and seminars**
POST holds a number of events and seminars each year that connect parliamentarians to leading experts from the research community and other sectors, including Government, the third sector and business. These can take the form of large events that are open to interested members of the public, or small closed briefings. POST also helps identify experts for Members, library research services and select committees, e.g. upon starting a new inquiry. POST also offers Members professional training, hosting briefings on-demand that bring Members together with internal and external experts in key topic areas.

POST welcomes suggestions from Members on topics for events or professional training. Suggestions may be made to one of POST’s Board members or to the Director.

In addition, if you would like POST to help you to build connections with researchers in a particular area, please contact the Director.

**Support to select committees and other services**
POST provides advice on research evidence to support the work of select committees and other services. For example, POST advisers can provide assessments of evidence received by a committee, oral briefings to select committees on research evidence relevant to inquiries, and ad hoc peer-reviewed briefings prepared at the request of a select committee or the library research service.
POST covers a wide range of areas including health, biological sciences, physical sciences, ICT, energy, environment and the social sciences. If you would like to know more about POST’s support to select committees, please get in touch with POST or speak to the committee clerk or specialist.

In addition to the services it provides directly to Members, POST supports the use of research evidence across Parliament in other ways. For example, POST manages a Fellowship Programme for PhD students in collaboration with research funders and professional societies, which brings postgraduates into Parliament to support and learn about the activities of POST, the committee offices and the libraries. It also works with staff in Parliament who want to develop their skills in using research evidence, and with members of the research community who are keen to learn more about policy in general, and Parliament in particular.

National Audit Office (NAO)

The NAO scrutinises public spending on behalf of Parliament and is a source of expertise on all aspects of public spending, financial management and service delivery. Working closely with the Public Accounts Committee, the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), an Officer of the House and the head of the NAO, audits the accounts of Government and reports on the value for money achieved. The NAO also supports the work of select committees and individual Members.

The NAO is particularly interested in any concerns you may have regarding the proper conduct of public business or value for money in relation to the provision of public services. You can contact the NAO to raise such concerns or for advice on matters where you feel the NAO may be able to help.

You can obtain hard copies of NAO reports from the Vote Office or by contacting the NAO directly. Electronic versions are available on its website.

National Audit Office

020 7798 7665
parliament@nao.gsi.gov.uk
www.nao.org.uk

Vote Office x3631
vote_office@parliament.uk
Communications

Internal communications
The Central Communications Team coordinates and promotes information about the work of the House Service to you and your staff. It produces a regular online newsletter for Members with news from the House of Commons Service and the Parliamentary Digital Service. An online newsletter for your staff is also published.

The team can provide you with copies of key Member publications and guides and it can assist you with the publicity of events and exhibitions taking place in Parliament through the ‘What’s on’ campaigns. The team also manages the provision of news on the Commons Members and Members’ staff homepages on the intranet.

External communications
The House of Commons Media and Communications Service, in the Department of Information Services:

- Promotes better understanding of, and engagement with, the work of the House and its committees in print, broadcast and online media
- Provides a professional media service for journalists and serves as a central point of contact for media enquiries
- Provides media and communications advice and support to all House departments and committees
- Works with officials across both Houses to improve public information and access.

Central Communications Team x6163
central communications@parliament.uk

Media and Communications Service x0969
hocmedia@parliament.uk
Parliament’s intranet, website and digital channels

The Parliamentary Digital Service manages Parliament’s intranet, website and other digital channels such as Flickr, YouTube and Twitter. The Digital Service works to ensure that Parliament is able to use the web to support its work effectively, to provide accessible online information and to engage with the public.

Education Service

Parliament’s Education Service aims to inform, engage and empower young people to understand, and get involved in, Parliament, politics and democracy. It provides curriculum-based resources and engagement opportunities for students and teachers to explore the role, work and history of Parliament, and supports Members of both Houses in their work with young people.

The Education Service runs an annual programme of school visits to Parliament, which schools book directly with the Service, and in 2015 will open a new Parliamentary Education Centre that will greatly increase the number of schools able to visit each year. Qualifying schools are eligible for a Transport Subsidy to support the costs of a visit to Parliament.

Alongside a national Teacher Training programme and a regional schools outreach programme, a range of printed, online, and film resources are also available for schools. All bookings and enquiries should be directed to the Education Service.

The Education Service is also responsible for booking Member-sponsored tours of the Palace of Westminster and Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben).
Parliamentary Outreach

The Parliamentary Outreach service raises awareness of the work, processes and relevance of the institution of Parliament, with the aim of increasing levels of engagement. It is a bicameral service and part of a strategy endorsed by both Houses to strengthen the connection between Parliament and the public.

There are four main activities for the service:

- Delivery of tailored information sessions outlining how Bills become law, how select committees work and how to find information on Parliament's website
- Cultural programmes and exhibitions in partnership with local museums, libraries and archives
- Aiding and promoting the work of select committees, including public meetings in the regions and increasing the range and volume of relevant evidence
- Highlighting the relevance of Parliament to individual regions and devolved areas.

You are always informed when outreach events are taking place in your constituency.

House of Commons Information Office

The Information Office provides a telephone enquiry service for the public to ask about the work, history and membership of House of Commons. The office also responds to enquiries sent by email or letter.

The Information Office produces a range of material derived from official sources to explain the work and procedures of the House to the general public and to make the work of the House more accessible. This ranges from hard copy publications explaining, for example, how laws are made and the role of a Member; managing electronic lists of Members and Government posts; and web pages where visitors to the website can access information on business taking place in the coming week.
**Parliamentary Archives**

The Parliamentary Archives provides a records management and archive service to both Houses. Over three million records are held in the Victoria Tower repository, which was purpose-built and now conforms to modern environmental standards for the storage of historic records. Records date from 1497 to the present. These include original acts, journals, papers laid before Parliament, judicial records, evidence and plans deposited in connection with Private Bills, and a wide variety of administrative, ceremonial and architectural records. In addition, there are over 200 other collections, of which the most well-known are the private, political and parliamentary papers of Beaverbrook, Lloyd George and Bonar Law.

**Research and enquiries**

Records may be consulted by you, your staff and the public in the Archives’ searchroom which is open Mondays to Fridays from 10am to 4pm throughout the year. You are advised to make an appointment in advance to guarantee a seat and to pre-order records to the searchroom, but of course every effort will be made to accommodate you if you urgently require access.

The Archives can also assist you in answering enquiries about the records and history of Parliament. Portcullis, the Archives’ online catalogue, is available at [www.portcullis.parliament.uk](http://www.portcullis.parliament.uk).

Copies of records can be provided in paper or digital format. Copies for the use of Members engaged on parliamentary business are free; copies made for other reasons (including Government business, constituency business and personal research) will be charged at the Archives’ standard rate.
**Advice to Members**

The Archives can advise on the care of your own papers including their conservation and storage. It is also able to provide impartial advice to you about suitable UK record offices and libraries for the deposit of your own collections (the Archives itself only acquires the papers of Members if they meet a number of strict criteria).

**Exhibitions**

Topical displays of records and new acquisitions can be seen in the display cases in the Royal Gallery or Robing Room. The Archives has an active outreach programme, including exhibitions and external lending, which seeks to promote the Archives as a core resource of Parliament for study, learning and leisure. All such activities are promoted on the intranet and in internal newsletters, as well as on our social media channels including Twitter (@UKParlArchives).

**Tours**

The Director of the Parliamentary Archives is always happy to hear from Members or Member-sponsored groups who would like to book a tour of the Archives.

**Location**

The Archives adjoins the Victoria Tower repository on the first and second floors of the Palace. The Archives searchroom is accessed via the Sovereign’s lift from the ground floor (opposite the Pass Office at Black Rod’s Garden Entrance) or the principal floor (outside the Robing Room and Royal Gallery). Take the lift to the second floor, where the searchroom is located.
Public access to information

Members of the public have a right to request access to information held by public authorities. The right to request access to information is enshrined in three different laws according to the type of information to be accessed:

- Requests from an individual to look at his or her personal data should be dealt with under the Data Protection Act
- Requests for environmental information should be dealt with under the Environmental Information Regulations
- Any other written request for information should be dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act.

Members of Parliament are not public authorities under the Freedom of Information Act or the Environmental Information Regulations and are not obliged to respond to requests under these laws.

Members are subject to the Data Protection Act and requests for personal data that is held by a Member should be sent directly to that Member and not to the House of Commons.
**Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)**

The Freedom of Information Act deals with access to official information. In addition, there are also regulations which provide access to environmental information. These are known as the Environmental Information Regulations (see page 89).

The Freedom of Information Act applies to most public authorities including the House of Commons (but it does not apply to information held by individual Members). The Act gives the public a general right of access to information held by public authorities. The Act also requires public authorities to have an approved publication scheme which is a means of providing access to information which an authority proactively publishes. The House of Commons scheme and other information about the Act are online.

When responding to requests, there are procedural requirements set out in the Act which an authority must follow. There are also valid reasons for withholding information, which are known as exemptions from the right to know. These exemptions are designed to prevent unwarranted prejudice arising from disclosures and include protection for parliamentary privilege, private personal data and security.

**Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA)**

Individuals have a right to request access to personal data about themselves under the Data Protection Act (DPA). Such requests will be processed under the Data Protection Act and not the Freedom of Information Act. The Data Protection Act also requires the Houses to comply with certain principles regarding the way personal data is processed.

You are individually responsible under the DPA for information held by your offices. You must register as a ‘Data Controller’ with the Information Commissioner (a straightforward process).
Information Rights and Information Security (IRIS)
The Information Rights and Information Security (IRIS) Service can help you make the right decisions about processing, protecting and disclosing information and data you are required to work on. The team can also provide general advice and guidance about the operation of the FOIA and DPA. Privacy, confidentiality, integrity and accessibility are the fundamental principles of the work of the IRIS service.

Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR)
Members of the public have a right to request access to information about the environment. Such requests are processed under the Environmental Information Regulations and not the Freedom of Information Act.

Information Commissioner
The Information Commissioner’s Office is the UK’s independent authority set up to promote access to official information and to protect personal information. Further details about relevant laws are available on the Information Commissioner’s Office website.
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Catering services

There are many catering outlets on the Parliamentary Estate. You are entitled to entertain guests in most places, with the exception of the Members’ Dining Room and Members’ Tea Room (the Smoking Room is predominantly exclusive to Members; guests are allowed in the afternoons).

The opening hours of, and access arrangements for, each facility vary according to their location on the Estate. Opening times change in recess periods. Full details of opening hours, locations, access regulations and menus are available on the intranet.
### Palace of Westminster

**Principal floor** facilities have easy access to the Chamber and Central Lobby

**The Members’ Tea Room** provides you with a venue in which to have hot and cold meals and light refreshments throughout the day. Access is restricted to Members. Open from early morning to rise of House during sitting periods.

**The Members’ Dining Room** is a traditional full service dining room for Members only. Bookings are not taken.

**The Strangers’ Dining Room** is a full service, fine dining experience and is ideal for entertaining. Booking is advisable and may be made online.

**The Pugin Room** offers morning coffees and extensive afternoon teas to you and your guests in splendid surroundings.

**The Smoking Room** is a relaxing lounge that offers an afternoon tea service for Members and up to 6 guests. It reverts to Members’ only bar service in the evenings.

### Ground floor facilities

**The Terrace Cafeteria** is open all day serving Britain’s favourite foods and classic international dishes. There is easy access to the riverside terrace.

**The Strangers’ Bar** offers the widest range of draught beers, real ales (including guest ales), spirits and wines in the House of Commons, as well as access to the riverside terrace.

**The Churchill Room** is predominately used for events. It opens as a restaurant on Monday evenings, providing another full service dining option for you and your guests. Booking is advisable and may be made online.

**Moncrieff’s Café bar and self-service restaurant** form part of the press complex and can be found between Star Chamber Court and the Colonnades via a lift.

**Jubilee Café** is located near the main entrance to Westminster Hall and offers barista-made coffee and light snacks to all visitors to Parliament.

### Portcullis House Atrium

**The Despatch Box** is the place for barista-crafted coffee, speciality teas, homemade baguettes and snacks.

**The Adjournment** is a casual dining, table service restaurant featuring classic favourites and modern dishes. Booking is advisable and may be made online.

**The Debate** is an assisted service cafeteria with an eclectic menu influenced by global street food and London’s thriving food market scene. It offers breakfasts, lunches and an extensive range of snack items.

### 1 Parliament Street

**Bellamy’s self-service** offers you healthier hot lunches, an innovative salad bar, jacket potatoes and a view over Parliament Square.

Vending services are also available in Norman Shaw North, Norman Shaw South, Portcullis House first floor, and the Palace Clock Corridor (near the photo booth).
**Personal catering and retail accounts**
A facility is available within the House of Commons for Members to set up a catering and retail account. This allows Members to charge their purchases at parliamentary catering and retail outlets to an account, with the balance being automatically deducted at a set date each month.

To find out more about this facility or request an application form, contact the Cash Management & Accounts Receivable team.

**Letter Board**
The Letter Board in the Members’ Lobby allows you to receive urgent communications from other Members and from your staff when you are near the Chamber. Your staff may hand in up to six letters intended for the Letter Board each sitting day. Further details on the use of the Letter Board are available from the Principal Doorkeeper.

**Members’ showers and changing rooms**
Shower and changing rooms for male Members are opposite the hairdressing salon in the North Curtain Corridor by the Terrace Cafeteria. They are available at all times on both sitting and non-sitting days.

Shower and changing rooms for female Members are off the Library Corridor (principal floor) and the Clock Corridor (ground floor near the cash machines). They are available at all times on both sitting and non-sitting days.

Bathrooms are available in the north-west corners of floors 2, 3, 4 and 5 in Portcullis House.
Members’ cloakroom and lockers

There is a Members’ cloakroom next to the Members’ entrance in New Palace Yard. You are allocated your own peg. An attendant is normally available in the cloakroom during the working day. Lockers are available for you in various corridors in the Palace. Applications for a locker should be made to the Members’ Accommodation Manager in the Department of Facilities.

Families and children

The Members’ families’ room, off the Lower Waiting Hall, is available for use by your spouse or partner and other family members on sitting days from 10am until the rise of the House and on non-sitting days from 10am to 6pm. A television set and a small selection of toys are available there.

Your staff who have children may be eligible to claim childcare vouchers if they need to pay for childcare in order to work. Contact the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) for further information.

There is a baby care room on the second floor of the Palace, near the pulpit on the Upper Committee Corridor, where parents may feed babies in privacy and comfort. Baby changing facilities are available directly opposite this room. On the principal floor, there are baby-changing facilities off the Lower Waiting Hall. There are also baby-changing facilities on the first floor of Portcullis House, one next to Meeting Room P and another close to the Attlee Suite.

Nursery

Children of Members and their staff between three months and five years of age are eligible to use the bright and modern nursery in 1 Parliament Street.
**Lost property**

Lost property is managed by staff in the Hallkeeper’s Lodge in St Stephen’s Hall, to whom lost property should be handed and any enquiries addressed.

When the Hallkeeper’s Lodge is closed any urgent enquiries about lost property should be made to the Duty Manager.

**Cash machines**

Cash machines are available in the Palace in the Clock Corridor, which is on the ground floor and links Star Chamber Court with the Terrace Cafeteria and the souvenir shop. There is also a cash machine in the Post Office in Portcullis House.

There are cash machines in the corridor outside the Lords’ Bar and River Restaurant on the ground floor.

**Westminster Gym**

The Westminster Gym is in 1 Canon Row. Various membership options are available to all passholders. It contains a comprehensive range of equipment and provides a wide range of exercise classes. Both male and female changing rooms are fitted with saunas and there is a steam room and vertical sun bed. An extensive range of therapies is also offered.

**Hairdressing salon**

A hairdressing salon, John Simon, is in the North Curtain Corridor, close to the Terrace Cafeteria. The opening hours are 9am to 6pm on weekdays during sitting periods. The opening hours during recesses are posted on the door.
**Retail and shops**

A range of exclusive products and bespoke gifts are available to you, your guests and your staff from the following shops:

- The House of Commons Shop in the Medals Corridor (off the House of Commons Terrace)
- The Jubilee Shop (off Westminster Hall)
- The Houses of Parliament Shop at 12 Bridge Street, which stocks a range of gifts, souvenirs, books and current parliamentary and Government documents
- The online shop at [www.shop.parliament.uk](http://www.shop.parliament.uk).

Selected souvenirs are available from the Despatch Box in Portcullis House.

**Chapel and Chaplain**

The Chapel of St Mary Undercroft is off Westminster Hall, to the right of the steps leading down from St Stephen’s entrance.

Every Wednesday when the House of Commons or the House of Lords is sitting, Holy Communion services are held at 10.15am and 12.45pm and Roman Catholic masses are held at 6pm.

Members may use the Chapel for weddings, christenings and other services. Up to six visitors may be escorted into the Chapel by full parliamentary passholders at certain times.

Information can be obtained from Black Rod’s Office.
**Smoking and use of e-cigarettes**

Smoking is not permitted on the Parliamentary Estate except in the designated areas which are shown on maps available on the intranet. Similarly the House of Commons Commission has agreed that the use of e-cigarettes should only be permitted in designated outdoor areas.

Visitors, for whom you or your staff have responsibility, must not smoke or use e-cigarettes except in designated outdoor areas.

**Filming and photography**

There are restrictions on photography, filming, painting and sketching, and radio interviews on the Parliamentary Estate.

**House of Commons filming and photography rules for Members and passholders**

**Direct arrangements**

Members may make their own arrangements without additional permissions for filming and photography in the following areas:

- Members’ own offices
- Interview/meeting rooms in Westminster Hall and Portcullis House
- The Jubilee Room
- Conference and meeting rooms in the parliamentary outbuildings at times when they are normally available.
New Palace Yard
Members can be filmed and photographed in this area subject to a few conditions. Requests must be booked through the Serjeant at Arms Access Team and no more than two can be scheduled at one time. The maximum time allowed for filming/photography in this area is fifteen minutes and film crews are limited to a maximum of three parliamentary photo passholders. You will be provided with a permit to show to security staff on arrival in the area.

Elizabeth Tower/Big Ben
The Elizabeth Tower is available for media purposes subject to suitability of piece and availability. A facility fee of £400 an hour plus VAT is charged. Interviews can be arranged with clock specialists if required.

Exclusions
Filming and photography in connection with advertising, fund raising or for commercial purposes may not take place at any time; nor may the following areas be used without the express permission of the Administration Committee:

- The Chambers, Division Lobbies, Members’ Lobbies or committee rooms of either House
- Any place along the Line of Route.

Interview points in Central Lobby, Committee Corridor, Atrium and outside Macmillan Room, Portcullis House
These areas are available for interviews with Members or for an introduction or commentary on specific business of the House. They should be booked through the Serjeant at Arms Access Team. Crews should be of three or less and all should be parliamentary photo passholders (some exceptions apply).
House of Lords filming and photography rules

In February 2014, the Administration and Works Committee agreed a new set of filming and photography rules, which came into force at the beginning of the 2014-15 Session. The rules regulate all filming and photography in the House of Lords (whether taken on cameras, mobile phones or tablet computers) and also cover sound recording, painting and sketching. The new rules have been refreshed to make them clearer and easier to understand. A booklet containing the new rules is available from Black Rod’s Office.

Broadcasting

The Broadcasting Unit provides camera coverage of proceedings in Parliament. It is responsible for relaying broadcast quality coverage from the main Chamber to UK and international media organisations from the main Chamber and Westminster Hall. A number of select committee meetings are also chosen by broadcasters for use on TV, radio and online.

The Unit is also responsible for the automated camera coverage from committees not chosen for television coverage.

All material (dating back to July 2009) is made available live and on demand.

The Broadcast Unit also oversees the work of the Parliamentary Recording Unit. For a small charge, they can make available video from proceedings in the Commons or provide a photographic still from any item in the archive as a photographic print or jpeg computer file.

If you wish to select an image or video clip in person please call x5511 to make arrangements. The Unit is below the stairs to your right as you enter 7 Millbank. Alternatively, to order material or for any other inquires relating to the archive please email pru@parliament.uk.
Accessibility

Improving accessibility and facilities for Members, staff and the public is one of the House Service’s priorities. All tours are accessible for wheelchair users. Facilities are also available for visually impaired and deaf or hard-of-hearing visitors. Leaflets giving access information to disabled visitors, Members of both Houses and passholders are available.

Refuge points and emergency evacuation lifts are available across the Estate. If you or your staff feel that your circumstances, either permanent or temporary, would cause you difficulties leaving the Estate in an emergency then you should have a personal emergency evacuation plan. The Fire Safety Manager will be pleased to discuss this with you.

The Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service can advise on accessibility issues.
Medical facilities
The Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service (HWS) offers specialist medical advice, guidance and support.

The HWS team includes occupational health doctors, an occupational health adviser and a clinical nurse advisor. The main medical services provided for Members are as follows:

- Confidential medical assessments – these are offered to Members every three years or earlier, if requested.
- Occupational health issues – an occupational health consultant can provide advice.
- General Practitioner (GP) service – if you wish to see a GP because of an acute medical problem, you should first contact the clinical nurse advisor in the Lower Waiting Hall on x5103, who can then arrange for an appointment to be made.
- Minor treatments – the clinical nurse advisor is available in the Lower Waiting Hall for advice on illness and injuries occurring at work and will refer patients to specialist agencies where necessary. Facilities are available for minor treatments such as dressings or the removal of stitches.
- Overseas travel – vaccinations and medication for official overseas travel can be provided free of charge, via HWS, at St Thomas’ Hospital.

Health and safety
Good health and safety is integral to the effective and efficient operation of Parliament.

Parliament’s policy is to take practical steps to prevent injuries and ill-health; not to create a risk averse or risk free environment. However, this can only be achieved with the active support, involvement and cooperation of everyone on the Estate.

The following sections contain vital information about health and safety requirements on the Parliamentary Estate and your responsibilities when working away from it.
Health and safety at Parliament

As an elected Member and employer you are ultimately responsible for health and safety matters associated with your staff and your work. Whilst at Parliament this includes contributing towards a safe and healthy working environment for everyone on the Estate by:

- Following all relevant physical and administrative health and safety measures.
- Ensuring your decisions and actions do not jeopardise your own or anybody else’s health and safety.
- Reporting any concerns you or your staff have about the safety of the physical Estate, its operations or any equipment provided by the House for your use.
- Promptly reporting any injuries and safety-related incidents that involve you or your staff whilst on the Estate.
- Taking appropriate steps to manage the health and safety of your staff who work at Parliament.

General information and guidance is available on the safety at Parliament and the health and wellbeing pages of the intranet.

Accidents, injuries or medical emergencies

In the event of a serious accident or injury, you and your staff should call x3333 to arrange assessment by a first aider, and the calling of an ambulance if necessary. Trained first aiders are present in all parliamentary buildings.

Injuries and other safety incidents, such as near misses, must be reported as soon as possible via Parliament’s online reporting system.

Contact details for local first aiders are held by the reception desk for each building. There is also a full list on the intranet.
Parliamentary buildings and Estate operations
Safety concerns about the buildings, building services or any Estate operations should be reported to the Parliamentary Estates Directorate’s 24/7 Works Help Desk.

Equipment provided by the House Service
Safety concerns about computer equipment provided by the Parliamentary Digital Service should be reported to the Digital Support Desk.

Safety concerns about any other equipment provided for your use on the Estate should be reported to the Works Help Desk.

Event safety
If you sponsor or organise an event on the Estate you have responsibilities for ensuring it is set up and run safely.

Visitor safety
You are responsible for the health and safety of your visitors at all times whilst they are on the Estate. The general safety requirements, along with the regulations about bringing visitors to Parliament, are available on the intranet.

Safety advice
General advice is available for Members and their staff on the safety at Parliament pages on the intranet and the Health and Safety Executive’s website.

There is a small internal Parliamentary Safety Team, which provides each House Service with a source of professional advice on strategic, policy and operational safety matters. However, the team’s role does not extend to providing advice directly to Members or their staff.
Health and safety away from Parliament

As an employer you are ultimately responsible for all health and safety matters associated with your constituency office, your staff and your work as an Member. This means you have to manage your health and safety risks and comply with your legal obligations in the same way as a small business.

The Health and Safety Executive provides a range of excellent free guidance on its website to help you do this, including:

- A ‘health and safety made simple’ toolkit
- An office risk assessment tool
- Example risk assessments.

The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health has also produced a specific guide for Members of Parliament. Although published in 2005 it contains some very useful and practical advice. It is free to download from the Institution’s website.

Asbestos

All areas on the Parliamentary Estate containing asbestos are managed in accordance with the Parliamentary Asbestos Management Plan. Details of investigations are recorded in the Asbestos Register, which is held by the Parliamentary Estates Directorate (PED). This register is available for inspection.

The presence of asbestos within a building does not mean the occupants are at risk. Asbestos becomes a problem only when it is disturbed or damaged in a way that allows fibres to get into the air. PED operates safe and effective asbestos management procedures, using licensed contractors, to ensure that risks are minimised during any operation to remove asbestos.
Fire safety and emergency evacuation

On hearing the fire alarm you should immediately leave the building by the nearest available exit. Instructions and details of evacuation muster points are posted on the fire information notices adjacent to all manual fire alarm call points on the Estate. Special evacuation arrangements are in place for the Chamber.

To assist you in evacuating any premises on the Parliamentary Estate in the event of a fire, Fire Safety Awareness Training is available to all Members and Members’ staff on the parliamentary intranet.

If you have any difficulty in responding to an evacuation signal and evacuating a building please contact the fire safety team who can help identify appropriate arrangements for your safe evacuation and develop a personal emergency evacuation plan.

Use of the office space as sleeping accommodation is not allowed. The Estate, with the exception of designated residential properties such as the Speaker’s House, is classified and certified as office accommodation and the life safety fire precautions in place meet the associated office based standards. If you are working at an hour when you would not usually be expected to be in your office for your own safety please inform security staff of your presence.
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Room bookings

A variety of meeting rooms are available across the Parliamentary Estate, including the committee rooms on the Committee Corridor and in Portcullis House. Rooms may be booked for a maximum of two hours; if longer periods are required then additional Members’ names must be indicated. Your staff may not book rooms in their own names.

A self service room booking system is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for all meeting rooms (except committee rooms). All bookings will be automatically confirmed by email.

Committees of the House have absolute priority and private meetings in committee rooms may be bumped or cancelled at any time by committee business; this is particularly likely on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. While every effort will be made to ensure that your original booking is maintained, please understand this may not always be possible; the Banqueting and Events team will do its best to accommodate your needs if alternatives are available.

If your booking is altered or cancelled, the Banqueting and Events team will send an email to the person who made the booking or the named host to notify you of the change. If your booking is made well in advance there may well be several alterations in the time before your meeting. You will receive an email notification each time there is a change.

Self service room booking system
intranet.parliament.uk/self-service-room-bookings
Events Team x3090
hoceventsteam@parliament.uk
Food and drink for meetings

Different arrangements for the consumption and provision of food and drink apply to different meeting rooms:

- No refreshments, except water, may be consumed within any committee rooms across the Estate. Hot drinks may be permitted during private committee meetings at the discretion of the meeting Chair.

- Portcullis House: a chargeable hospitality service is available for meeting rooms on the first floor.

- 1 Parliament Street: refreshments (available for purchase from Bellamys on the first floor) may be consumed in meeting rooms on the ground floor, but must be self-cleared.

- Westminster Hall (W rooms): hot beverages only may be consumed if purchased from the Jubilee Café, but must be self-cleared.

- Westminster Hall (Jubilee Room): catering provision is serviced by the Jubilee Café. Further details and a catering booking form can be found on the Jubilee Room intranet page. This is a self-collect and clear service.

Separate arrangements apply to the booking of banqueting and private dining rooms administered by the Banqueting and Events team.
Exhibitions

Upper Waiting Hall
Exhibitions in the Upper Waiting Hall are for the information of Members of both Houses. Exhibitions are held at times when the House is sitting and run for five days only.

Exhibitions should not be of a contentious nature or contain items of advertising, commercial interest or material likely to give offence. Nor should they contain material intended to further the aims of any political party or group.

If you wish to sponsor an exhibition you will need to apply to enter the ballot for exhibitions. You should first confirm with the appropriate Government department that the content of the exhibition meets the criteria stated above.

Once the advice has been received – in writing – you should then sign a ballot form. The list of exhibitions will be submitted to the Administration Committee for approval.

There are three annual booking periods. You are restricted to one application during a booking period and no more than one application for the same exhibition will be entered into each ballot.

Portcullis House
The Portcullis House Atrium is reserved for art exhibitions mounted by the Speaker’s Advisory Committee on Works of Art and information exhibitions of interest to Members and others sponsored by departments of the House. It is not available for exhibitions sponsored by individual Members. The Upper Waiting Hall is reserved for these.

If you are interested in mounting an art exhibition in the Atrium you should take your proposal to the Speaker’s Advisory Committee on Works of Art. Art exhibitions will normally be displayed along the wall from the escalators to the Post Office.
Westminster Hall

Occasionally, exhibitions and events are held in Westminster Hall; these can be one-off events or exhibitions lasting several weeks or, for major exhibitions, several months.

If you have a proposal for an exhibition or event for Westminster Hall, please contact the Westminster Hall Advisory Group. The group advises the key stakeholders of Westminster Hall on the feasibility, appropriateness and cost of any proposed exhibitions and events in Westminster Hall.

Performance events

You may have legitimate interests in supporting the performing arts. Subject to certain restrictions and, in the case of musical performances, with the recommendation of the Administration Committee and the agreement of the Speaker, you may sponsor such events in the Attlee Suite, the Terrace Pavilion and the Members’ Dining Room.

In cases where, exceptionally, these venues are unsuitable and if the Administration Committee considers it appropriate, the Speaker has agreed that very limited use of the Portcullis House Atrium may be made for such events providing that they do not disrupt parliamentary business.

House of Commons venue hire

Parliament’s impressive venues are exceptionally versatile and ideal for any occasion, from an intimate dinner or lavish banquet to a business conference or private wedding. Whether hiring elaborately decorated dining rooms, purpose built marquees or meeting rooms, Parliament has the facilities to suit any event. Full details can be found on the intranet.
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VISITORS & GUESTS
Access arrangements for spouses or partners

You may sponsor an application by your spouse or partner for a parliamentary photo-identity pass. For more information contact the Pass Office.

Spouses and partners holding parliamentary photo-identity passes may access a number of areas on the Parliamentary Estate including many catering facilities, the Members’ families’ room and the Westminster Gym. For further advice on facilities for spouses and partners, please contact the Serjeant at Arms.

Visitors to Parliament

All visitors to Parliament must be security screened and be issued with a visitor’s pass. Visitors may proceed unescorted within the public areas but must be met and escorted by a parliamentary passholder with escorting rights if entry into a non-public area is required. Visitors must be escorted at all times including to the exit at the end of their visit, or back to a public area within the Estate.

The main entrances for visitors are at Cromwell Green, Portcullis House and Black Rod’s Garden. Visitors may also arrive at 1 Parliament Street, Canon Row and 7 Millbank but must be met by a full passholder. Visitors may not use St Stephen’s entrance. For advice on receiving guests or information for visitors with special requirements please contact the Serjeant at Arms.

Please note that there is no car parking available to visitors and very limited space for disabled visitors on official business. This must be pre-booked through the Serjeant at Arms. There is a public car park opposite Parliament at Abingdon Street.

You can book or sponsor functions within the House of Commons. For further information on booking function rooms and to place a booking, please contact the Banqueting Office. You are responsible for any guests you bring on to the Estate.
**Access to the Terrace**
You may escort up to six guests (including your staff and members of the press) on to the Terrace. For further advice on taking guests on to the Terrace or for the access regulations please contact the Serjeant at Arms.

**The Elizabeth Tower and Big Ben**
You may arrange for a tour of the Elizabeth Tower. Special security requirements must be met.

There are 334 stairs and no lifts. Tours take about 75 minutes and are free of charge. Demand is high and space is very limited so early booking and flexibility regarding dates and times is strongly recommended.

You must not offer tours of the Elizabeth Tower or Big Ben in raffles or auctions.
**Tours of Parliament**

The Tours Office, within Parliament’s Education Service, manages Member-sponsored tours of the Palace of Westminster.

Visitors will be guided on a parliamentary tour (the Visitor Route), which may include the Chambers of both Houses, the State Rooms in the House of Lords, and Westminster Hall. The full tour is not available when either House is sitting. Tours take around 75 minutes.

A permit is not required for parties of six or fewer when personally accompanied by you. For parties larger than this (up to 20 people), special permits must be applied for from the Tours Office but these are limited in number.

Please note that demand is high so early bookings and flexibility regarding dates and times are an advantage. Booking opens six months in advance. For further information on tours please contact the Tours Office.

You must not offer tours of Parliament in raffles or auctions.

**School visits**

Parliament’s Education Service works with schools and Members of both Houses of Parliament to support young people in developing their understanding of Parliament and democracy. It runs an annual school visits programme, as part of which Members are invited to meet school groups from their constituencies. A Transport Subsidy is available to qualifying schools to support their costs of visiting. The Service also provides a wide range of free resources which you can make use of in your own work with schools.
Public Gallery

The Admission Order Office is responsible for issuing tickets for the galleries of the House of Commons. It is just off the Central Lobby behind the statue of Gladstone.

You have an automatic allocation of two tickets every eleven sitting days (excluding Fridays) which are held at the Admission Order Office awaiting instructions as to how you wish to use them.

The Public Gallery allocation list is available from the Admission Order Office. In addition to this you can apply for two tickets per month on a Wednesday or up to six tickets on all other sitting days.
We welcome your feedback when you have received good service so that we know what works well for you.

There may be times when we do not meet the service standards that you would expect and you wish to register a complaint as a result. Your feedback helps us improve our services to you.

To give us feedback on our services, or to make a suggestion or a complaint, please contact the House of Commons staff responsible for the service by using the online feedback form: intranet.parliament.uk/memberfeedback.

In the event that you have been unable to obtain a satisfactory response from House of Commons staff, or if you are unsure which office to contact about a particular service, please contact the Governance Office on x1707 or governanceoffice@parliament.uk.

Feedback may also be given to the Administration Committee, which is intended to reflect the perspective of Members on the provision of House-wide services. The Administration Committee can be contacted on x2471 or committeea@parliament.uk.
Appendix II – Useful contact numbers

Main Switchboard x3000
Emergencies x3333

Chamber and Committee Services
Table Office x3302/3303
Public Bill Office x6758
Committee Office x5675
Hansard enquiries x4768
Duty Clerk (recess only) x3394
Vote Office x3631
Broadcasting Unit x5511
Security Control (including theft and out of hours access to offices) x5311
Pass Office x5920
Pass Access Unit x3468/5920
Speaker’s Counsel x3776

Facilities
Parliamentary Estates Helpdesk (maintenance and cleaning) x4747
Accommodation and Logistics Services (Members’ offices) x3080
Banqueting and Events Team (room bookings, private dining, banqueting services, film permits and exhibitions) x3090
General catering enquiries x3686
Postmaster (mail services) x4637

Finance
Accounts Receivable x6308
Members’ Pensions x2106
Human Resources and Change
Members’ HR Advice Service 2080
Health and Wellbeing Service 4782/1484
Safety Team 4782
Information Rights and Information Security Service (IRIS) 2559
Nursery 1592
Travel Office 4232
Westminster Gym 5546

Information Services
Library enquiry point 3666
Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) 2840
House of Commons Information Office 4272
Parliament’s Education Service 4496
Parliamentary Outreach 1650
Tours Office 3003

Parliamentary Digital Service
Digital Support Desk 2001

Speaker’s Office
General enquiries 5300

If you have not been able to obtain the information or response you need from the contacts listed on this card, please do not hesitate to contact the Governance Office on 1707.

Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA)
General enquiries 020 7811 6400
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Appendix IV – Maps

Portcullis House

- Passenger lift
- Wheelchair accessible lavatory
- Female lavatory
- Male lavatory
- Mobility impaired persons’ refuge and communication point
Palace of Westminster

- Wheelchair Route
- Wheelchair accessible lavatory
- Fully accessible lavatory
- Female lavatory
- Male lavatory
- Induction loop area
- Wheelchair accessible lifts*

*All lifts shown on this map are suitable for emergency evacuation.