This factsheet has been archived so the content and web links may be out of date. Please visit our About Parliament pages for current information.

This Factsheet is designed as a general introduction to the organisation of the permanent staff of the House. Much of the information included can also be found in the most recent House of Commons Commission Annual Report for 2009/10, which is available on the Parliament Internet site.

This Factsheet and links to related documents are available on the Internet through: http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/guides/factsheets/
Introduction
The Palace of Westminster (see Factsheet G11) revolves around the activity of Members in the Chamber, its committees and the legislative functions of central government. To support that activity there is a permanent staff of the House, which serves with complete political impartiality, called the House of Commons Service. The House of Commons Service continues to work despite prorogations (the formal end to the Parliamentary year), dissolutions (the official term for the end of a Parliament) and changes in government. The House of Commons Service is like the "Civil Service" of the House; though it must be emphasised that its staff are not Civil Servants of the Crown. They are involved in all aspects of running the House, from House procedure, security, housekeeping, provision of information, accounting, reporting debates, and cooking food. This Factsheet describes this structure although a detailed examination of specific services is available in other titles in the series.

Structure of the House Service

House of Commons Commission
The House of Commons Commission, a statutory body of six Members established under the House of Commons (Administration) Act 1978, is responsible for the management of the House. The Speaker is Chairman of the Commission, by virtue of his/her office, the Leader of the House is an ex officio member; one member of the Commission is nominated by the Leader of the Opposition (normally the Shadow Leader of the House); and three further members are appointed by the House (normally one senior backbencher from each of the two main parties and a representative of the smaller parties). The Commission answers Questions from Members in the House’s main Chamber. At present, John Thurso MP is its spokesman.

Under the 1978 Act, the Commission has overall responsibility for the staffing and expenditure of House Departments and in particular approves and lays before the House the annual Estimate for the House administration. Legally, the Commission is the employer of House staff and it is subject to a statutory requirement that the pay and general conditions of staff should be kept "broadly in line" with those in the Civil Service.

In practice, the Commission's power to appoint staff is delegated to Heads of Department although the Clerk of the House, Clerk Assistant, and Serjeant at Arms (which are Crown appointments) and a few other senior posts where the power of appointment has been delegated to the Speaker are exceptions. The Commission may, however, be consulted about senior appointments. These exceptions aside, recruitment, promotion and staff circulation are handled by the individual Departments subject to the overall guidance of the Department of Resources.

The work of each Department is reflected in the Commission's annual report, which is available on the internet from 1998/99 onwards.¹

¹ http://www.parliament.uk/about_commons/house_of_commons_commission/workinfo.cfm
House departments

There are five House departments:

- Department of the Chief Executive
- Department of Facilities
- Department of Information Services
- Department of Resources
- Refreshment Department

Since July 2000, the Clerk of the House has also been formally recognised as the Chief Executive of the House of Commons Service. Since 2007 the office of the Chief Executive has been established and is not affiliated to any department (see below).

A bicameral department (Parliamentary Information and Communications Technology or PICT) was created in 2006 to provide coherent information and communications technology across the whole of Parliament. Its Director, Joan Miller, also sits on the board of management.

Board of Management

The five Heads of Department meet together, under the chairmanship of the Clerk of the House, as the Board of Management. A senior member of staff from the Clerk’s Department is also a member of the Board, to reflect the fact that the Clerk of the House sits on the Board as Chief Executive rather than as a representative of his department. The Board is the executive body overseeing the administration of the House and is answerable to the House of Commons Commission.

There are various cross-House committees and groups of officials which report to the Board of Management. These include:

- The Business Risk and Resilience Group, which discusses contingency planning arrangements
- The Data Protection Group, which administers provisions within the Data protection Act for the House
- Group on Information for the Public, which sets Parliament’s strategy for public engagement
- Resource Management Group, which supports the House to achieve corporate benefit in HR, finance and commercial matters

The Board of Management forms the management side of the House of Commons Service Whitley Committee (see page 13).
The Administration Estimate
The Clerk of the House is Accounting Officer for the whole of the House of Commons Administration Estimate and is therefore responsible for the expenditure of all the five House departments and for other expenditure covered by the Administration Estimate, including superannuation, police and security services, telecommunications and computer services. The resource provided in the House of Commons Administration Estimate for 2009/10 is £219m. This figure does not include Members' salaries and allowances which is now administered by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) rather than the House. Similarly, the staff figures given in this Factsheet do not include Members' personal secretarial and support staff, whose salaries are charged against each Member’s Staffing Allowance. Members’ staff are employed individually by the Member in question.

Domestic committees
The House established an Administration Committee in July 2005, replacing the five ‘domestic’ select committees on Accommodation and Works, Administration, Broadcasting, Catering and Information which had existed since 1991. The remit of the Administration Committee is to “...consider the services provided for and by the House and to make recommendations thereon to the House of Commons Commission or to the Speaker.” Any recommendation whose implementation would incur additional expenditure charged to the Estimate for House of Commons Administration is also considered by the Finance and Services Committee. According to the Standing Order, the Administration Committee is to “have the assistance of the Officers of the House appropriate to the matters under consideration” and “shall make rules and give directions to Officers of the House in respect only of such administrative matters as may from time to time be determined by the Speaker or by the House of Commons Commission”.

The Finance and Services Committee considers expenditure on and the administration of services for the House, and has a particular role in assisting the Commission on financial and administrative issues, these include scrutiny of the draft Estimate and monitoring the financial performance of the House Administration. It is normally chaired by a member of the Commission.

Corporate Plan
A plan for the strategic direction of the House for the years 2006 to 2011 was agreed in July 2005 to replace an earlier plan covering the period from 2001 to 2006.

It sets out the primary objectives and supporting tasks of the House Administration and the priorities for the planning period. The main elements of the new plan are outlined below:

(i) Statement of values
The House of Commons Service seeks to serve the House of Commons, its Committees and Members, and the public, with honesty, probity and political impartiality; strives to achieve high ethical standards, value for money and professional excellence in all that it does; and seeks to be responsive to changing requirements. As an employer, the House of Commons Commission is committed to maximising the personal development of House staff, to valuing diversity and the contribution of all individuals, and to equality of opportunity.
(ii) Six strategic objectives for the House of Commons service

The Management Board has identified the following six goals – or strategic objectives – for the House Service:

- Members feeling they are receiving an excellent service from all parts of the House Service.
- The public feeling respect and trust for the House of Commons as an institution.
- Continuous and measurable improvement in the services we provide.
- Increased and demonstrable value for money and environmental sustainability in the services we deliver.
- The capability to deliver the services required now and in the future.
- Staff feeling that they are valued and work for a first-class organisation.

(iii) Core tasks for the House of Commons service

The core tasks are:

- To provide the advice and services that enable the House and its committees to conduct their business effectively.
- To provide the advice and services that enable individual Members (and their staff) to perform their parliamentary duties effectively.
- To promote public knowledge and understanding of the work and role of Parliament through the provision of information and access.
- To maintain the heritage and integrity of the Palace of Westminster and other buildings, objects and documents for the benefit of future generations.

(iv) Six supporting tasks

In support of the primary objectives the House Service also seeks:

- To provide a skilled and motivated workforce; giving recognition and reward for achievement and ensuring that all staff realise their full potential regardless of level or background; and promoting diversity.
- To provide a healthy, safe and secure physical environment in which the business of the House can be effectively conducted; this includes accommodation, office services, catering and security.
- To plan and manage all of the House’s resources to a high standard, achieving value for money and matching current public service standards including in the areas of risk and change management and environmental protection.
- To ensure that information is well-managed in pursuit of the primary objectives, in part by exploiting technology effectively.
- To maintain a good working relationship with the House of Lords, particularly in the provision of shared services; and to share information and best practice with other parliaments and assemblies, and to co-operate with other organisations that can assist the House Service in its work.
(iv) Priorities for the planning period

Anticipated priority areas for the planning period are security; public information; information management and ICT; human resources; accommodation and works; planning and management. More detailed strategies are being developed in each of these six priority areas to provide a basis for planning over the period to 2011. These strategies will set out what the Board aims to achieve by the end of the period, milestones towards delivery and an assessment of risk (i.e. things that might prevent delivery).

Office of the Chief Executive

The Office of the Clerk became fully operational on 1 November 2000. It supported the Clerk of the House as Chief Executive and provided the Secretariat of the Board of Management and its second-tier management groups (listed on page 3). It was responsible for overseeing the updating and dissemination of the House's strategic plan, on behalf of the Board. It assisted the Board in serving the Commission and the Finance and Services Committee. The Office also provided secretariat support for the House’s two Audit Committees. In 2007, The Tebbit Review recommended that the scope of the activities of the Office of the Clerk of the House should be expanded to embrace planning and performance management functions, an increased communication co-ordination role and that its staffing numbers should be increased. It was subsequently renamed the Office of the Chief Executive to reflect its larger role. The Office of the Chief Executive currently has around 20 staff.

The five House departments

The following sections outline the functions, staff numbers, and principal organisational subdivisions of the six House Departments.

Department of Chamber and Committee Services

This department had 516 full-time equivalent staff posts at the end of the 2008/9 session. An organisation chart is available in the House of Commons Commission Annual Report for 2009/10 in Annex 3. This can be found on the parliament website through the A-Z index.

Serjeant at Arms Directorate

- The Serjeant at Arms Directorate is responsible for access and the security of the Parliamentary estate as well as ceremonial functions. The Serjeant at Arms and the Deputy and Assistant Serjeants perform Chamber duties whenever the House is sitting. The Serjeant at Arms is also responsible for the management of the Metropolitan Police Service contract and the work of the Admission Order Office, the Doorkeepers, and the Pass Office, for access control and for the mail screening contract.

The Legislation Directorate comprises:

- The Public and Private Bill Office, which examines the drafts of Government and private Members’ bills to ensure that they conform to the rules of the House, and helps Members to draft bills and amendments. The Clerks of standing committees advise the chairmen and members of the committees on the application of the House’s rules and practices to the proceedings of the committees. Advice on the financial business of the House is
obtained from this Office. Members give notice to the Public Bill Office of presentation of bills, and of motions for leave to introduce bills ("Ten-minute rule bills"). The Office arranges for ballots for private Members' bills, and is also responsible for staffing European standing committees, the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Grand Committees and the Delegated Legislation standing committees. The Clerk of Divisions is based in this office. The Clerks involved with private bills (which are promoted by external agencies, such as local authorities) are responsible for monitoring compliance with the separate Standing Orders affecting such business, and in particular for staffing committees on private bills and the Committee of Selection; and

The Delegated Legislation Office, which provides the secretariat of the European Scrutiny and Regulatory Reform Committees, and also supports the Joint and Select Committees on Statutory Instruments. It provides support for the National Parliament Office in Brussels.

The Clerk Assistant's Directorate:

- The Table Office prepares the Order of Business and Notice Paper and receives Parliamentary Questions and motions for inclusion in them. The Clerks advise on how to bring Questions and motions into conformity with the rules of the House (see factsheets P1, P3 and P4).

- The Vote Office holds and issues official publications required for the conduct of business of the House. It also operates the Parliamentary Bookshop, which is open to the public and available on the internet. To these traditional functions has been added a wider role in the management of the printing and publishing requirements of the House, including running an in-House printing unit.

- The Journal Office publishes the minutes of the House in daily parts as the Votes and Proceedings, and each session as the Journal of the House. The Office does research into matters of procedure and precedent and advises on the form of motions, particularly those to do with the business of the House. It revises Standing Orders and drafts new Orders to meet the requirements of the House. The Journal Office deals with public petitions and, with the Legal Services Office, advises on matters of parliamentary privilege.

- The Overseas Office maintains contact with Commonwealth and foreign parliaments at official level and provides information and advice on the rules and practices of the United Kingdom Parliament. It provides the secretariat to the United Kingdom delegations to the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe, the Western European Union, NATO and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe.
The Committee Directorate comprises:

- **The Committee Office.** Every select committee, including the departmentally-related select committees, is served by one or more Clerks, which makes the Committee Office the largest in the Clerk's Department, with over 180 staff. The staff of each committee varies according to the nature of its work but the Clerk is the committee's senior officer who, as well as acting as its Secretary, advises on its programme and on the preparation of Reports. The Scrutiny Unit is based within the Committee Office to provide advice to select committees; in particular on expenditure and draft legislation. The staff come mainly from outside the House of Commons and have expertise in audit, value for money, statistics, the Estimates and social policy.

- **The Director of Parliamentary Broadcasting** is responsible for all aspects of the televising of the proceedings of the Chamber and Committees of the House and manages the Broadcasting Unit. She also advises the Broadcasting Committee on such matters.

- **The Department of the Official Report** is responsible for producing an edited verbatim report (Hansard) of the sittings of the House, Westminster Hall and its Standing Committees and the processing and printing of written answers and ministerial written statements. (Select Committee evidence sessions and Private Bill Committees are covered separately by a private firm). The Department is also responsible for the annunciator system. (Further information can be found in factsheet G17)

- **The Legal Services Office** was established on 1 October 2000. Its head is Speaker's Counsel and the senior staff are professional lawyers. The Office provides legal advice to the Speaker, the House of Commons Commission, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards and committees of the House, and also the Board of Management, the Corporate Officer and Departments of the House on matters such as commercial contracts, employment, health and safety and corporate law.

- **The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST)** became part of the House service in April 1993. The Supervisory Board is drawn from the membership of both Houses. The Office analyses issues of interest to both Houses on matters of science and technology.

  (Further information can be found in factsheet G16)

**Department of Facilities**

The Department of Facilities provides all catering and retail services (including private dining and banqueting for Members) for the House of Commons. The Department is also responsible for a wide range of services including: provision of accommodation and advice to Members and others, use of official stationary, mail delivery, booking of meeting and committee rooms, issuing filming and photography permits, exhibitions in Upper Waiting Hall and tours of the Clock Tower. The Department of Facilities also includes:

*Parliamentary Estates Directorate (PED)* – The Parliamentary Estates Directorate maintains the heritage and integrity of the Palace and other buildings for the benefit of future generations. The
The House of Commons Administration

House of Commons Information Office Factsheet G15

The team is also responsible for ensuring that the parliamentary estate is a fully-functioning working environment, equipped for the demands of the 21st century.

- **Parliamentary Works Services Directorate (PWSD)** – responsible for delivering maintenance and improvements within the parliamentary estate. This involves placing contracts, planning and delivery of in year maintenance work and management of capital projects throughout the estate. This Directorate was set up on 1 April 1992 following the Ibbs report.

- **Catering and Retail Services** – responsible for the efficient operation of the House of Commons catering facilities within the agreed financial framework. As well as responsibilities for banqueting, Catering and Retail Services also run the parliamentary gift shops and the restaurants and bars across the parliamentary estate.

- **Accommodation and Logistic Services** – manages Members’ and Members’ staff accommodation. The team seeks to ensure that Members and their staff are provided with appropriate accommodation and a range of services which enable them to work in a comfortable, safe and functional environment.

Office Keeper and their teams are responsible for delivering services and assisting Members across the parliamentary estate.

The team also arranges tours of Big Ben and provides a room booking and advisory service on matters relating to meeting rooms in the House of Commons. These include Committee Rooms, meeting rooms, the Jubilee Room, the Macmillan Room, the Attlee Suite and exhibitions in the Upper Waiting Hall. The Events Team also advises and provides permits for filming and photography in the House.

- **Facilities Finance** – Leads the Department’s financial planning to ensure there are sufficient resources to deliver the Departments objectives and provides financial information on all aspects of the Department’s work to give an accurate picture of how the Department is performing. Ensures that departmental users of financial IT systems have the necessary knowledge and skills, and that information held on IT systems is accurate, up to date and fully describes the work of the Department.

The Department of Information Services

This Department (335 posts) is responsible for the management of the Members' Library and reading rooms in the Derby Gate Library and for the provision of research, analysis and information services to the House of Commons. It is organised into the following areas:

**Research service**

The eight specialist Research Sections deal with all in-depth enquiries received from Members and their staff. They also write briefings papers for the use of Members, in connection with Bills and other topics of public and parliamentary interest. Research Sections normally consist of five specialist researchers covering the subject areas of the section, together with qualified librarians and other executive, clerical and secretarial staff who organise and maintain the Section’s information resources of the section. Research staff deal with over 16,000 written detailed replies a year to enquiries and some 15 to 18,000 more enquiries are dealt with orally. They
produce around 100 formal Research Papers a year\(^2\) - these are available on the Parliament website - and are responsible for over 3,000 less formal briefings made available on the Parliamentary Intranet.

The eight sections are Business and Transport (transport, taxation, consumer affairs, financial services, employment, companies); Home Affairs (including civil & criminal law, police, arts, media, immigration, gambling, licensing); Science and Environment (Scientific and technology issues, the environment, energy, planning, medicine, agriculture); Social Policy (Health, social security, education, housing, personal social services); Social and General Statistics (Statistical research on all subjects except economic; British and international); Economic Policy and Statistics (Economy & economic statistics, including economic modeling, labour market statistics); International Affairs and Defence (UK foreign and defence policy, the history and politics of foreign countries and international relations, including the political and institutional aspects of the European Union); Parliament and Constitution Centre (subjects covered include devolution, elections, parliament, local government (structure), machinery of government, political groups and standards in public life).

Parliamentary and reference services
Reference and Reader Services
Answers quick reference enquiries, both general in nature and specialist parliamentary enquiries; and provides cuttings service. The office also staffs the Members' Library in the Palace of Westminster and an enquiry point in Portcullis House, mostly serving Members' staff.

House of Commons Information Office
During 2008/09 the Information Office answered 34,096 telephone enquiries and 6,871 written enquiries, most via email from outside Parliament on the work of the House. The office also publishes a range of documents most of which are made available on the internet at the Parliamentary web site [www.parliament.uk/directories/hcio.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/directories/hcio.cfm).

Parliamentary Education Service
Provides a service for schools, teachers and young people, providing information about both Houses, publishes a range of information including 'Parliament Explained' booklets, posters and videos; organizes a range of visits programmes, pupil parliaments and teacher seminars and operates a website for young people at [http://www.parliament.uk/education/](http://www.parliament.uk/education/)

Library Resources and Information Systems
Indexing and Data Management Section
Creates and maintains the parliamentary information on PIMS (Parliamentary Information Management Services), to provide online indexes to proceedings and papers for the UK Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly. Has responsibility for the quality of all data, including subject indexing, within the PIMS repository and prepares printed indexes to Commons Hansard and the Sessional Index to Parliamentary Papers.

\(^2\) URL: [http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_publications_and_archives/research_papers.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_publications_and_archives/research_papers.cfm)
Library Resources Section
Deals with library acquisitions, management of online information sources, cataloguing and classification of holdings, conservation, and stock control. It also administers a book and video borrowing service for Members and manages the Library Catalogue. (Further information can be found in factsheet G18)

Department of Resources
The Department of Resources has a dual role in underpinning the work of the House of Commons service:

- It provides financial and human resource management and business services to Members, Members’ staff, departments and staff of the House of Commons. In this role, it is a service provider aiming to meet customer needs.

- It plays a major part in ensuring that good governance arrangements are in place, providing assurance to the House, and to the Clerk as Accounting Officer in particular, that financial, staff and other resources are managed in line with relevant legislation, regulations and good practice. In this role, it develops and implements policies and procedures and monitors compliance with them. It nevertheless aims to be responsive to differing customer requirements, developing policies and procedures in consultation.

Within the Department there are the following sections:

The Director of Resources has a key role in the corporate management of the House. He is Principal Establishments Officer and Principal Finance Officer. He is the key advisor to the Finance and Services Committee and is a member of the Board of Management. He chairs corporate groups on human resources, senior pay and grading.

The Director's Office provides support to the Director of Resources and reception services for the department.

The Operations Directorate acts as the secretariat to the Trustees of the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund and the Members' Fund and manages the staff pension arrangements. It also deals with the salaries and pensions of the staff of the House and assists all House departments with human resources management and staff matters, including the application of employment and other relevant legislation. The Personnel Advice Service (PAS) for Members and staff provides up to date advice and information on employment and HR issues.

The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) took over responsibility for the payment of Members' expenses from the Department of Resources with effect from 7 May 2010. For information on the new MPs’ expenses scheme, please visit IPSA's website, www.theipsa.co.uk.

The Business Management and Development Directorate manages the various development projects within the department and has overall responsibility for the HAIS Service Centre which looks after the House Administration Information System and runs the HAIS helpdesk.
The Human Resources Management Directorate is responsible for compiling human resources and pay policy and also has a special responsibility for relations and negotiations with the relevant trade unions (see section below: Employer/Employee Relations in the House).

The Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service falls into this Directorate providing services to both Houses of Parliament. It is responsible for developing a coherent and modern safety risk management strategy in line with best practice, providing medical services to members and staff and offering welfare advice to staff of both Houses. The OHSWS also oversees the running of the Westminster Gymnasium on behalf of the Director of Finance and Administration.

The Financial Management Directorate has two main areas of responsibility in connection with the House’s two Estimates:

- House of Commons: Administration; and
- House of Commons: Members

It helps prepare the Three Year Financial Plan and then monitors and controls the in-year expenditure of the House. It produces the annual Resource Accounts and provides its accountancy services to external bodies. The team also monitors and report assets owned by the House.

The Commercial Services Directorate provides professional leadership, support and advice to all staff with procurement responsibilities, ensuring that the House procures its goods and services in an efficient, effective and fully legally compliant manner.

The Internal Review Services Directorate (IRS), in partnership with PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PWC) is responsible for Internal Audit within the House of Commons. IRS and PWC undertake a joint annual programme of work, which covers a wide range of risk based corporate and departmental reviews and projects across the House, to provide an appropriate, independent and objective opinion to the Accounting Officer on the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal control, risk management practices (where appropriate) and governance procedures. The IRS PWC Partnership also provides an independent and objective consultancy service specifically to help line management improve the organisation’s risk management, control and governance.

IRS audit reports are sent to the House of Commons Audit Committees which advise the Accounting Officer on the adequacy of audit arrangements and on the implications of the assurances provided the IRS partnership.

IRS also undertakes Job Evaluation reviews (JEGS and JESP), when required, providing advice on the grading of individual posts to higher level reviews of organisational structure and encouragement of more modern and efficient approaches to work and job design.
Speaker’s Office
In addition to the six Departments there is the Speaker’s Office (6 posts) headed by the Speaker’s Secretary. The Office provides a direct secretarial and personal service to the Speaker in connection with official duties, which includes handling approaches and inquiries made to the Speaker by Members and others on a wide range of activities of the House. The Speaker’s Secretary is a personal appointment made by the Speaker, and the Speaker is able to call on the services of the Speaker’s Counsel who provide legal advice in connection with a variety of House business (principally delegated legislation, European legislation and Private Bills).

Parliamentary ICT: a unified service
In the autumn of 2003 the Clerks of both the House of Commons and the House of Lords agreed to set up a review of the governance and management of information technology (IT) and information systems (IS) services across both Houses. The review was carried out by a small group of senior officials under the chairmanship of Sir Michael Cummins (then Serjeant at Arms) and with the help of an external expert.

The review team concluded that, given the increasing reliance on shared systems and infrastructure, the currently fragmented governance structure was weak in terms of coherence and strategic planning and that it also stood in the way of proper career development for the skilled specialists involved. The recommended solution was to create a new unified management structure for IT and IS under a single director who would operate at management board level in both Houses.

After the publication of the report in March 2004, there followed a period of consultation with staff and with the Information Committees of both Houses before proposals were formally put before the authorities of both Houses. In June 2004 the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee approved the general principle of a unified ICT service for both Houses to be created under a single director.

The change process has been overseen since September 2004 by a Change Board composed of senior officials of both Houses, with an external adviser. A Change Director and small change team have also been appointed, and staff have been engaged in extensive consultations about the shape and functions of the new service.

An appointment to the new post of Director of Parliamentary Information and Communications Technology (DPICT) was made in May 2005 and the new organisation was formed in January 2006, serving both Houses of Parliament.

Other Parliamentary Services
Many important services to Parliament are provided in ways and by organisations that fall outside the structure of the House of Commons Departments described in sections 1 and 2 of this paper.

Services provided on a Parliament-wide basis include telephones, the Post Office, with a sorting office and three counter service points (see Factsheet G20), and a Travel Office run by Carlson.
Wagonlit Travel (CWT). The Stationery Office Ltd (TSO), who currently deal with all Parliamentary printing and publishing, have a Liaison Office on the premises.

The UK branches of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) have small, separate secretariats which service the British delegations to the plenary conferences of those two bodies, and organise seminars, meetings and other facilities for visiting parliamentarians from other member states around the world. These secretariats have their own separate budgets (not counted in the Table in section 6 below), negotiated annually with the Treasury.

Certain services are shared with the House of Lords. For instance, the HL Record Office keeps the archives of both Houses. The Parliamentary Education Service acts for both Houses. Staff Welfare is a joint service and a Library indexer is paid for by the Lords. There is a Joint Working Party of the HC and HL libraries and the HL Record Office. The Parliamentary Sound Archive Unit, formerly part of the House of Lords, became the Parliamentary Recording Unit when responsibility for it was transferred to the House of Commons in April 1992.

Security for the parliamentary precincts is in the hands of a force of police and security officers from the Metropolitan Police. The Head of Security, who is a Chief Superintendent, is responsible to the two Houses for security matters, and liaises closely with the Serjeant at Arms and (for the Lords) Black Rod. The House of Commons and House of Lords make periodic block payments to the Metropolitan Police to cover their respective shares of the costs of the security force.

The Information Architecture Support Unit was set up in September 2002 to develop an information structure for Parliament as a whole. It was incorporated within the new Parliament Information and Communications Technology Service from January 2006.

**Employer/Employee Relations in the House**

The House of Commons Service considers it to be in staff’s interests to belong to a trade union (TU) and encourages membership of the appropriate TU. The unions represent staff’s point of views on issues such as pay, conditions of service and welfare. The Commission formally recognises the following trade unions:

- FDA (formerly Association of First Division Civil Servants)
- Prospect
- Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS)
- GMB: Britain’s General Union (GMB)
- A consortium of Craft Unions.

Consultation with recognised Trade Unions takes place under the umbrella of the House of Commons Whitley Committee. The aims of the Whitley system are to:

- secure cooperation between management and staff with a view to increasing efficiency and ensuring the well being of staff
- provide a mechanism for consultation, discussion, negotiation and dealing with grievances
- bring together the experience and points of view of all concerned.

The main Whitley Committee, chaired by the Clerk of the House, as Chief Executive, meets once
a year; but many of its responsibilities are discussed in the General Purposes Sub-Committee (GPSC), which meets three times a year. There are also separate meetings on a wide range of issues as they arise. The Committee does not have a role to play in pay negotiations. These are negotiated directly between the unions representing particular groups of staff and the management of the House.

In the case of dispute, there is a Disputes Procedure Agreement, concluded between the Commission and the unions, which lays down a process of conciliation and offers, and for major matters, in the last resort, unilateral access to binding arbitration.

The Trade Union Side has a President, elected annually, and an Administrator, who is a member of House staff seconded to the role for a period of 5 years.
Further reading
Robert Rogers and Rhodri Walters,
Pearson Longman

Contact information
House of Commons Information Office
House of Commons
London SW1A 2TT
Phone 020 7219 4272
Fax 020 7219 5839
hcinfo@parliament.uk
www.parliament.uk

House of Lords Information Office
House of Lords
London SW1A 0PW
Phone 020 7219 3107
Fax 020 7219 0620
hlinfo@parliament.uk

Parliamentary Education Unit
House of Commons
London SW1A 2TT
Phone 020 7219 2105
Fax 020 7219 0818
edunit@parliament.uk

Parliamentary Bookshop
12 Bridge Street
Parliament Square
London SW1A 2JX
Phone 020 7219 3890
Fax 020 7219 3866
bookshop@parliament.uk
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Factsheet G15
The House of Commons Administration
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1. Very useful □  Fairly useful □  Not much use □
2. Too long □  The right length □  Too short □
3. Clear □  Not always clear □  Rather unclear □

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Please write to:
Head of Section
House of Commons Information Office
London SW1A 2TT

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hcinfo@parliament.uk

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