



New Members' guidebook

This guidebook has been designed to help you to familiarise yourself with the House of Commons and to guide you through the initial arrangements that you will need to make as a new Member of Parliament. More detailed information on services provided by House of Commons departments will be given during induction and over the next few weeks. Should you want further information on anything, staff will be on hand to help in the New Members' Reception Area, and contact names and numbers are provided in this booklet.

The guidebook is aimed primarily at new Members of Parliament, but is being circulated to all Members of Parliament for information.

Access to the Parliamentary Estate

Everyone who works in Parliament is required to wear a photo-identity pass, and anyone walking around the Estate without a visible pass may be challenged by security staff.

Collecting your parliamentary photo-identity pass

You will need a photo-identity pass to allow you to access and move around the Parliamentary Estate. You should collect your pass from the New Members' Reception Area in Portcullis House. The main entrance to Portcullis House is on the Victoria Embankment – this is marked on the map of the Parliamentary Estate at the back of this booklet. Staff there will be ready to direct you to the New Members' Reception Area.

The New Members' Reception Area will be open from 8.30am to 8pm in the week following the General Election. It is important that you pick up your pass before attempting to move around the Estate without an escort.

You should bring proof of identity (passport or driving licence) and your letter from the Returning Officer confirming your election to gain admission to the Parliamentary Estate.

You will be asked to set a memorable PIN when you collect your pass and set a memorable date (birthday or anniversary etc) to provide additional security.

The main Pass Office is at 1 Canon Row and the manager can be contacted on x2970.

Access to the Palace of Westminster by car or motorcycle

To access the car park both a car park pass and a photo-identity pass are required. You should not bring your car or motorcycle to Westminster until you have obtained the necessary passes and security advice. An application form will be given to you when you pick up your security pass.

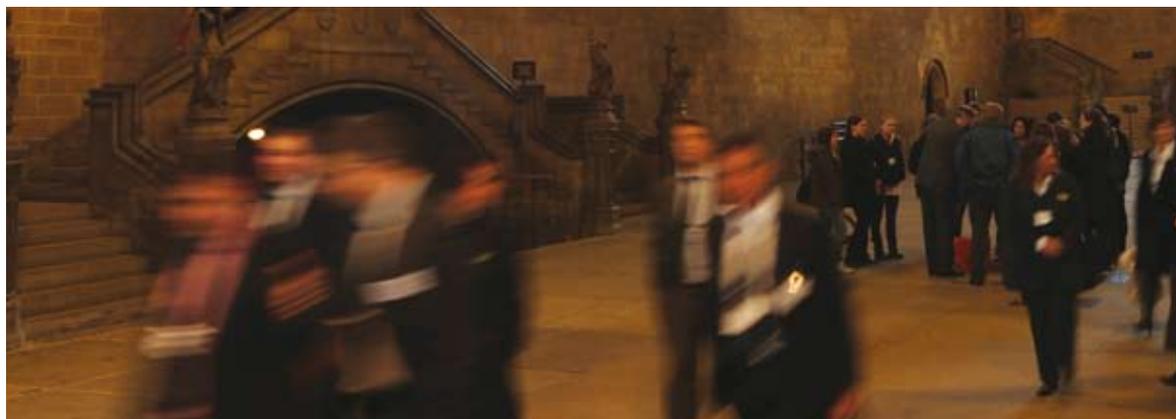
Finding your way around

The Parliamentary Estate can be confusing when you first arrive. Guided orientation tours will be available to help you during the induction period.

If you have any special access needs or require further information before you arrive, please contact the Serjeant at Arms on 020 7219 3030.

If a pass is lost or stolen, please report the matter urgently on x5920.

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Office accommodation services and equipment

GUIDANCE ON CONDUCT AND USE OF PARLIAMENTARY RESOURCES

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, for example:

- Accommodation, including offices and meeting rooms
- Research support
- ICT equipment and services
- Catering facilities
- Stationery

These facilities and services are provided in order to assist Members in their parliamentary work. They should be used appropriately, in such a way as to ensure that the reputation of the House is not put at risk. They should not be used for party political campaigning or private business activity.

You must make yourself aware of the Code of Conduct which has been agreed by the House of Commons and of 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.

You should also be aware of the Acceptable Use Policy relating to the use of parliamentary IT equipment. Please note that you will be asked to sign this on behalf of yourself and your staff.

Please note that the Code of Conduct and the statement on what Members can expect from the House Service and on what is expected in return will be sent to you next week, in hard copy and electronically, as part of a Members' Handbook communication.

You should have received a copy of the Acceptable Use Policy of parliamentary IT equipment together with this guide.



Temporary arrangements

Your party Whip is responsible for your permanent office allocation (see page 5 for details). Until you have been allocated a permanent office, hot-desk facilities and temporary lockers will be available for you to use at Westminster. Alternatively, you may find that your party Whip has made arrangements for you to share an office with an experienced Member until your own office becomes available.

You can use hot-desk facilities set up in the Palace (Upper Committee Corridor) and 1 Parliament Street. Each room has wi-fi coverage and you can use your parliamentary laptop to access the Parliamentary Network, and other wireless computing devices to access the internet. In addition, a PC and printer are provided in each room.

IT staff will be available to assist you in the hot-desking areas. You can also get IT assistance by calling the IT Service Desk on x2001. Please note that, as a courtesy to other new Members, a clear desk policy is in operation in these rooms.

Please do not order large amounts of stationery until you have been allocated a permanent office or have located a constituency office. If you would like official House stationery, small quantities are available from Accommodation Services on x3080.

If you are sharing an office with a returning Member please bear in mind that your colleague's office is not your permanent base. Arrangements will be made for you to plug in a laptop and to print from it, but no additional IT equipment, telephones or furniture will be made available to you there.

For further information on temporary office accommodation please contact the Accommodation Office on x3080.

Office accommodation services and equipment

IT equipment and services

Staff from Parliamentary Information and Communications Technology (PICT), the IT department serving both Houses of Parliament, will be available at the New Members' Reception Area to set up your user account on the Parliamentary Network (PN). You will then be able to access the PN from shared computers or from other equipment supplied by Parliament.

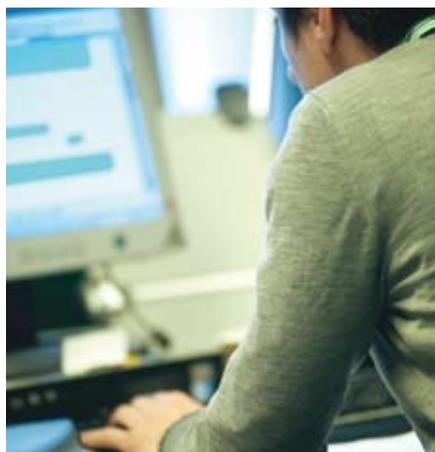
PICT staff will also issue you with a laptop if required. This will be provided free of charge as part of your equipment allocation. You will be able to use your new laptop to access the PN by using wi-fi in the shared rooms, the Atrium of Portcullis House and other designated areas (including the House of Commons Library).

PICT staff can also explain our Remote Access system which allows you to access your PN email via a web browser when you are away from the Parliamentary Estate. This includes a web based option which can be used with your own, non-PICT, equipment.

Telephones, messaging services and voicemail

You have been allocated a telephone number on the 020 7219 exchange. This number will be given to you at the New Members' Reception Area and will remain yours until you leave Parliament, so you can publicise it straight away as your contact number. Phones in the shared accommodation can be set up with your number while you are there.

Until you are allocated permanent accommodation, the Parliamentary Switchboard Supervisor on x6161 can divert your number to one of the telephones in the temporary accommodation area. The switchboard can also take messages for you for delivery by email or SMS. Alternatively, the switchboard can divert your parliamentary telephone number to your personal mobile.



Voicemail is available on all new numbers and PICT staff will be available to discuss your requirement at the New Members' Reception Area, as you may prefer to divert your telephone line to voicemail rather than the switchboard until you get your permanent office. The voicemail system can alert your mobile phone if you have received a message and you can dial in from anywhere in the world to retrieve it.

PICT training

You will be offered training to familiarise yourself with the voicemail system and IT equipment. You can also be shown how to use Microsoft Office products, including Outlook email and calendar facilities, the intranet and the internet. **For further information, assistance and advice on all IT and telephone services please contact the PICT Service Desk on x2001.**

Lockers

Temporary lockers are available near the hot-desk facilities, for you to store papers and personal belongings. You will be allocated a temporary locker when you visit the New Members' Reception Area. You will receive a key to your locker, and directions to find it. **For further information on lockers please contact the Accommodation Office on x3080.**

Postal services

The Postmaster will be available in the New Members' Reception Area to discuss how your mail should be managed. Alternatively you can make arrangements with his staff in the main Post Office off Members' Lobby. A full range of Post Office Counter Services is available at the three on-site Post Office Counters: in Central Lobby, Members' Lobby and Portcullis House. **For further information about postal services please contact x4639.**

Stationery

You and your staff may order stationery for your parliamentary or constituency offices from the House of Commons stationery catalogue. Stationery ordering packs are available at the New Members' Reception Area, or subsequently from local office keepers. The House of Commons stationery help desk number is 0845 226 7791.

House of Commons stationery is provided at public expense and must not be used for purposes which are not properly a charge on public funds. **For guidance on the rules governing the use of House of Commons stationery contact the Department of Resources on x1340.**



Permanent arrangements

The party 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 we aim to have you up and running in your new office within one week. The Accommodation Office (x3080) will contact you to plan the details of your office (layout, furniture and telephone arrangements).

For any accommodation requests or problems you should contact either the Accommodation Manager on x3080 or your local Office Keeper at the reception desk in your building. Should you experience technical problems — for example, with plumbing, ventilation or heating — you should report it to the Works Help Desk on x4747.

IT equipment

You will be offered a laptop when you arrive. There will also be a PC and printer in your office when you move in. Further equipment can be ordered at any time during the Parliament and experience has shown that it is often better to see your office and take some time before ordering. PICT has ICT Service Advisers available to discuss your needs.

You are entitled to five computers in total, of which up to three may be laptops, with PCs making up the remainder. You may also have two printers. One or both of these can be a multifunction printer, which also acts as a fax machine, copier and scanner. This equipment is provided by PICT from

a standard catalogue and will be available for inspection at the New Members' Reception Area. You may be able to be reimbursed for additional items, including PDAs, from the catalogue, under the terms of the new expenses scheme.

Telephones

PICT will install up to four telephone lines in Westminster for you and your staff. Digital handsets will be provided on up to two of the lines and the other lines may be used for fax machines or analogue handsets.

Constituency support

Computer equipment can be ordered for use outside the Parliamentary Estate and will be delivered and installed for you at the address specified on the order form. In addition, you can also subscribe free of charge to broadband services that allow access to the internet and the Parliamentary Network from constituency and other locations. **For further information, assistance and advice on all PICT services please contact the PICT Service Desk on x2001.**

Your salary

Your pay and expenses will be administered by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) who will have a presence at the New Members' Reception Area. You will be inducted by IPSA in how to use the new online system to claim for reimbursement of expenses incurred in accordance with the new scheme. You should familiarise yourself with it as quickly as possible.

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

In order to claim for reimbursement of expenses from IPSA, and to be signed up for your pay and pension, you must ensure you complete the form enclosed in your New Members' pack before you arrive at the House.

This form includes information which is required by both the House and IPSA. You should bring details of your bank account, including sort code, and your national insurance number. You must also bring your passport, and be prepared to provide a password for financial and IT purposes.

IPSA will require you to bring your P45, if you have received it, for tax purposes.

Pensions

Once you have taken the oath or affirmed, you are a member of the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund (PCPF) as from the day after you were elected. You can choose to pay contributions at either 6 per cent or 10 per cent of gross pay. For more information on your pension, contact the Pensions Unit on x2656.

Travel

The reimbursement of travel expenses is the responsibility of IPSA. Travel arrangements can be made using the House's Travel Office which is operated by an outside travel agency (currently Hillgate Travel) and is on the Lower Ground Floor, Palace of Westminster, approached by Star Chamber Court. You may use the office if you need train tickets, airline tickets, Eurostar tickets, hotel reservations, or car hire and insurance. There is also a foreign exchange bureau. **The Travel Office can be contacted on x4232.**

Congestion charge

Please remember that the congestion charge has to be paid when driving to the House of Commons (unless your vehicle is exempt). Further information on the congestion charge can be found on the Transport for London website: www.cclondon.com.

Employment of staff

Legally, you are the employer of your staff and the Department of Resources provides advice on employment and personnel issues. The Personnel Advice Service can be contacted on x2080 and will be available at the New Members' Reception Area.

Please note that IPSA is responsible for the reimbursement of staffing expenses.

Constituency offices

IPSA is responsible for the reimbursement of expenses that enable you to run your office and that fall within the rules of the new scheme.

Accommodation in London

Information about nearby hotels will be available at the New Members' Reception Area (some of these can be booked at the preferential government rates). **The Travel Office will be able to provide that information and can be contacted on x4232.**

Members with disabilities

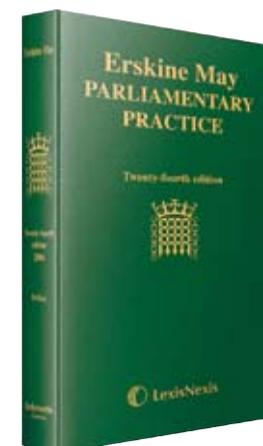
If you have a disability that you believe means that you need additional support or adjustments to your parliamentary office to undertake your new role, please contact the Safety, Health and Wellbeing Service on x4782/1484, who will be able to discuss with you the options available. Additional financial support may be available from IPSA through the expenses scheme. For further information please refer to the scheme or speak to a member of IPSA's staff.



For further information on pay and expenses please visit the IPSA website at:

www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk
or contact the IPSA helpline on 020 7811 6400.





There will be a briefing for all new Members on conduct in the Chamber on Wednesday 12 May at 9.30am.

Swearing-in

When a new Parliament meets, the first business is the election of a Speaker. 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. The recital of the oath or affirmation has legal effect. Members who have not taken the oath or affirmation are unable to draw a salary, and **must not** sit during any debate or vote in a division of the House (once the Speaker has been elected) or **they will lose their seat**.

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

Members are called to take the oath or affirm in order of seniority, first the Father of the House, then members of the Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet, other Privy Counsellors and other Ministers. 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 1997-2001 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 to Members at the Table: the New Testament; the Old Testament (in English and Hebrew); the Torah; 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.

You are asked to respect the protocols surrounding the handling of the Koran and the Granth and should 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.

Registration of interests

The main purpose of the Register of Members' Financial Interests is to provide information of any pecuniary interest or other material benefit which a Member receives that might reasonably be thought by others to influence his or her actions, speeches or votes in Parliament or actions taken in his or her capacity as a Member of Parliament.

Registration of such interests is required under resolutions of the House.

You must register your interests within one month of taking your seat. Thereafter you should inform the Registrar of any change to your registrable interests within four weeks of its occurrence. You are required to register your interests even if you have a nil return.

In addition, you must declare interests which are relevant to particular parliamentary proceedings and this obligation applies from the time you take your seat.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards will write to you shortly after you are elected with information about your obligations under the Code of Conduct and related rules of the House, including how you should register and declare your relevant interests. Further information can be found at: www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmcode.htm. If you have any immediate queries, please contact the Registrar of Members' Financial Interests on x3277.

Chamber matters

Debates

If you wish to speak in debates in the Chamber, or in 90-minute debates in Westminster Hall, you should write to the Speaker in advance. If you have not written you may still take part in debates by approaching the Chair or seeking to catch the Chair's eye, but it is likely that preference will be given to those who have written in advance.

Selection of speakers in debate is at the Speaker's discretion. His objective at all times is to give all Members a fair opportunity to take part in debate. He will take account of relevant experience or expertise (in or outside the House), Members' expressed interests or constituency involvement and the number of times Members have previously spoken (or have failed to catch his eye) during the parliamentary session. He may have to impose time limits on speeches in order to give as many Members as possible the opportunity to contribute to debate. It will not always be possible for you to be called when you wish to speak. The Speaker will generally seek to be as helpful as possible to Members seeking advice on the likelihood of being called.

You need not apply to speak in Committee of the whole House, Report stages or on Lords Amendments. It will be enough for you to rise in your place on such occasions or, if you have a disability, otherwise indicate to the Chair.

Question time and statements

Before question time or ministerial statements, you should write to the Speaker seeking to be called only when you wish to draw to his attention a particular fact (for example a constituency connection or personal interest), which you think he should bear in mind. 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.

Statements

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.

Chamber conduct



'Good temper and moderation are the characteristics of parliamentary language'

Parliamentary Practice, Erskine May

Statistics

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.

Conventions and courtesies

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.

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.

Mobile phones should not be used in the Chamber. Pagers may be switched on as long as they are in silent mode. When addressing the House you should not use electronic devices as an aide memoire or to receive messages.

You should bear in mind Erskine May's advice in *Parliamentary Practice* that "good temper and moderation are the characteristics of parliamentary language". It is also important that exercise of the privilege of freedom of speech is tempered with responsibility.

Speaking

When speaking in debates you should be present for the opening and winding-up speeches, and you should remain in the Chamber for at least the two speeches after you have concluded. If you fail to observe these courtesies, you will be given a lower priority on the next occasion you seek to speak.

You must speak from the place where you are called, which has to be within the formal limits of the Chamber (so not from the cross-benches below the bar).

You must resume your seat whenever the Speaker (or a Deputy) stands up.

You must address the House through the Chair. Accordingly, other Members should not be addressed as 'you', but should be referred to as 'the honourable Member for [constituency]', 'my honourable friend' or 'the honourable Member opposite'. Privy Counsellors are 'Right Honourable'. Ministers may be referred to by office or simply as the Minister.

You may refer to notes but you should **not** read speeches or questions; this both tends to stifle debate and makes it harder for you to respond to interventions.

Intervening

Members may intervene briefly in each other's speeches, but only if the Member who has the floor gives way.

Oral questions

Members with oral questions should not leave the Chamber until supplementary questions on their question have ended.

Half hour adjournments

Half hour adjournment debates in the Chamber or in Westminster Hall are intended to be an exchange between the Member and the Minister, who will respond on behalf of the Government to the issues raised. Other Members may take part in the debate only with the permission of the Member and Minister concerned and, if permission is granted, the Chair must be notified.

Courtesies to colleagues

You should notify colleagues whenever you intend to refer to them in the Chamber; table questions or Early Day Motions (EDMs) which specifically affect colleagues' constituencies; or intend to visit their constituencies (except on purely private visits). For further information please contact the Table Office on x3302 or the Speaker's Office on x5300.

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; please contact x6391. You may table oral and written questions, EDMs and amendments, take part in committees, present a petition or a bill, or speak in Westminster Hall, even if you have not yet spoken in the Chamber. For further information please contact the Table Office on x3302.

The Department of Chamber and Committee Services provides you with advice and support on every aspect of the business of the House and its committees, and the Table Office can also advise you on which office or individual is best able to help you.

Library staff can provide information about the history of your constituency or statistics for it, as well as the maiden speeches of your predecessors. More generally, the Library, which has an experienced team of subject specialists, provides information and analysis to assist you with all aspects of your work, whether speeches, committee work, media appearances, constituency issues and casework, overseas visits or general matters of public interest. You can ask for briefings on specific issues of international, national or local importance; statistics on economic or social issues; general advice on issues affecting constituents; and copies of documentation such as newspaper articles and speeches. The day's topical briefings are listed on the Library homepage. For further information, please contact the Library on x3666.

Hansard reporting

Hansard (the Official Report) is the full and accurate report of proceedings in the Chambers 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. For further information please contact Hansard on x1480.

Parliamentary papers

You are supplied with parliamentary papers by the Vote Office. It has several document issue points around the Estate, including in Members' Lobby. The main office, is situated directly below the Members' Lobby outlet, on the Lower Ground Floor. The entrance to this office is next to the cash machines in the House of Commons.

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

- the 'Vote bundle', which includes the daily summary agenda, order of business, questions and early day motions tabled the previous day, and amendment papers;
- Hansard (daily, weekly, bound volume, index volume);
- public bills and acts;
- Command papers, including Government White and Green papers; and
- House of Commons papers.

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

Forms listing all recently published parliamentary and certain non-parliamentary papers and EU publications, and providing an opportunity for them to be ordered, are circulated to Members regularly with the Vote bundle. Documents are dispatched by return of post.

Papers are normally made available online at the same time as, or shortly after, publication in hard copy at:
www.parliament.uk/publications/index.cfm. For further information on parliamentary papers please contact the Vote Office on x3631.

Programme of new Member briefings

Further briefings have been arranged for Members and will be repeated according to demand. Briefings include:

- Parliamentary standards and the registration and declaration of interests
- Making friends with the Order Paper
- Employing others: what you need to know
- Freedom of information – threat or opportunity?
- Data protection – protecting your constituents' interests
- Tabling questions and motions: what you need to know
- Making your mark on legislation
- How select committees work

How to book a briefing

These briefings and many more are available to book via the Online Members' Centre, intranet.parliament.uk/hoc-omc, where you will also find further information about the induction programme.

House talks on party programmes

The House is also delivering a programme of talks on various subjects including security, employment practice, FOI, accommodation and IT as part of party programmes. Please speak to your Whips for more information.

These talks are also available as a separate programme run by the House to Members not covered by party programmes. For further information visit the Online Members' Centre.

IPSA briefings

IPSA will be providing briefings on the new expenses scheme.

Induction programme for Members' staff

The House will also be running an induction programme for Members' staff. For information on this programme please contact x5732.

Chamber briefing and group photograph for all new Members

Wednesday 12 May

■ 9.30am: Briefing (Commons Chamber)

Essential information about how to take part in Chamber and other proceedings, and some wider parliamentary issues.

■ 12noon: Group photograph (Westminster Hall)

The House of Commons Administration



The House of Commons Service

The House of Commons Service provides a politically impartial service to all Members of Parliament. It functions in accordance with the decisions of the House of Commons Commission.

Management Board

The senior body of House officials is the Management Board. This is chaired by Malcolm Jack, the Clerk of the House, in his role as Chief Executive of the House Service and includes four Directors General of House departments and two external members. It is supported by the Office of the Chief Executive.

Useful contact numbers:

Clerk of the House and Chief Executive: x3758

Office of the Chief Executive: x1707

The House of Commons Commission

The House of Commons Commission is the statutory body responsible for the running of the House. It prepares the budget for the House, decides most matters of policy; it appoints staff of the House, and determines their pay and other conditions of service. The Commission is chaired by the Speaker and comprises the Leader of the House, the Shadow Leader and three backbench Members from the main parties. One member of the Commission acts as its spokesman in the House (for example, in answering parliamentary questions). The Clerk of the House attends the Commission as Accounting Officer.

The Commission is advised by the Finance and Services Committee, the Administration Committee and the Administration Estimate Audit Committee.

Useful contact number:

Secretary to the Commission: x3270

Speaker's Office

The Speaker is supported in his official duties by the Speaker's Office, headed by the Speaker's Secretary.

Useful contact numbers:

Speaker's Secretary: x4111

General enquiries: x5300

Diary Secretary: x3696

Department of Chamber and Committee Services

(Clerk Assistant and Director General: Robert Rogers)

Chamber, Committees and Legislation

These directorates provide professional and administrative services related to the business and procedures of the House and the work of its committees. Advice is provided confidentially and impartially to individual Members as well as to the House as a whole, to the Speaker and the Deputy Speakers, to Committees and the Chairs of those Committees, as well as to government and opposition parties. Particular offices include the Table Office (questions, motions, procedural advice), the Public Bill Office (legislation) and the Committee Office (select committees). The Vote Office is responsible for the distribution of parliamentary papers and other documents.

Useful contact numbers:

Table Office: x3302/3303

Committee Office: x4300/2712

Public Bill Office: x3258

Journal Office: x3320

Vote Office: x3631

Official Report

Hansard is an edited verbatim report of proceedings in the Chamber, in Westminster Hall and in General Committees in which Members' words are reported with repetitions and redundancies omitted and with obvious mistakes corrected. The directorate also processes and publishes written ministerial statements, written answers to questions, petitions, Government observations on petitions, and ministerial corrections. The Annunciator service gives information on parliamentary proceedings on television screens throughout the Estate. The Broadcasting Unit maintains an archive of debates.

Useful contact numbers:

Chamber enquiries: x5525/2350/1480

Westminster Hall enquiries: x5522/5257

Written answer enquiries: x5258

Committee enquiries: x5291/5762/6846

Broadcasting Unit: x5511

Serjeant at Arms

In addition to ceremonial duties, the Serjeant at Arms is responsible for security and access, as well as the maintenance of order.

Useful contact numbers:

Security control (including theft): x5311

Pass Office: x5922

Access to offices (out of hours): x5311

Department of Facilities

(Director General: John Borley)

The Department of Facilities provides a range of key services to Members, staff and the visiting public. The department is responsible for catering and retail services (including private dining and banqueting), furnishings and maintaining the heritage and integrity of the Parliamentary Estate. The department is also responsible for a wide range of services associated with Members' offices and visitor requirements which include stationery, lost property, mail delivery, booking of meeting and committee rooms, filming and photography permits, Upper Waiting Hall exhibitions and clock tours.

Useful contact numbers:

Client Relations (including House stationery): x3070

Maintenance and cleaning: x4747

Members' offices: x3080

Events team (room bookings, film permits and exhibitions): x3090

General catering enquiries: x3686/5303

Private dining and banqueting services: x2275/4804

Lost property: x4626

Postmaster (mail services): x4637

Hairdresser: x3093

Department of Information Services

(Director General and Librarian: John Pullinger)

The Information Services Department includes the House of Commons Library and POST (Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology). The Library provides impartial, confidential information and research services for Members of Parliament in connection with their parliamentary duties. The Library and POST produce general briefings available via the Parliament website and the parliamentary intranet.

The department also coordinates information and access for the public (including tours). The House of Commons Information Office gives information about the work, history and membership of the House of Commons to the public. Parliament's Education Service runs a visit programme for schools and provides a wide range of free resources about Parliament.

Useful contact numbers:

Library enquiry point: x3666

Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST): x2848

House of Commons Information Office: x4272

Parliament's Education Service: x4496

Visitor Services: x3003

The House of Commons Administration continued

Department of Resources

(Director General: Andrew Walker)

The Department of Resources supports the House by providing financial, human resource and business services to Members, Members' staff, departments and staff of the House of Commons. It also contributes to good governance by ensuring that resources are properly managed.

The department is responsible for administering and providing impartial and confidential advice on your pension and employment matters. Core services are pensions, human resources and the Safety, Health and Wellbeing Service (SHWS).

Useful contact numbers:

Members' pensions: x4962

Members' staff pensions: x4753

Parliamentary Safety, Health and Wellbeing Service: x1484

Travel Office: x4232

Information Rights and Information Security Service (IRIS): x2559

Westminster Gym: x5546

Parliamentary Information and Communications Technology (PICT)

(Director: Joan Miller)

PICT is a joint service providing information and communications technology services and training for both Houses of Parliament. It provides the infrastructure for the Parliamentary Network, manages the provision of IT equipment to you and your staff, and supports IS services and projects.

Useful contact number:

PICT service desk: x2001

For information on and access to key services, visit the Online Members' Centre:

intranet.parliament.uk/hoc-omc



Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA)

IPSA is the independent body which pays your salary and regulates and pays your expenses in line with the new expenses scheme which it announced in March 2010. This scheme and guidance will assist you in understanding how the new rules should be applied and are available on IPSA's website.

Contacts:

Website: www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk
Email: info@parliamentarystandards.org.uk
Tel: 020 7811 6400

National Audit Office (NAO)

(Comptroller and Auditor General: Amyas Morse)

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, an Officer of the House and 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.

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

Contacts:

Website: www.nao.org.uk
Email: enquiries@nao.gsi.gov.uk
Tel: 020 7798 7665

Visitors and guests

Access arrangements for spouses or partners

You can sponsor a photo-identity pass for your spouse or partner. **Contact the Pass Office on x5922 for details.**

Spouses and partners holding photo-identity passes may access a number of areas on the Parliamentary Estate including many refreshment facilities, the Members' families' room and the Westminster Gym. **For further advice on facilities for spouses and partners please contact the Serjeant at Arms on x3030.**

Nursery

A nursery providing spaces for up to 40 children will be opened by the House of Commons in September 2010. The nursery will be located in 1 Parliament Street and children of Members, Members' staff and House staff aged up to 5 years old will be able to attend.

If you would like to find out more please visit the Family Room in the New Members' Reception Area or alternatively contact Rosanna Speight on x1592.

Visitors to Parliament

Visitors to Parliament must be security screened and be issued with a Visitor's Pass. Visitors may proceed unescorted to the public areas but must be met and escorted by a pass holder if a meeting is in a non-public area.

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 pass holder. 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 on x3030.**

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 on x3030. There is a public car park opposite Parliament at Abingdon Street: www.westminster.gov.uk/carparks/abingdon.cfm.

Access to the Terrace

You may escort up to six guests (including your staff and members of the press) onto the Terrace. **For further advice on taking guests onto the Terrace or for the access regulations please contact the Serjeant at Arms on x3030.**

Tours of Parliament

Visitors may 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. 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 obtained from the Central Tours Office. Tours take around 75 minutes. Please note that tours are very popular and need to be booked six months in advance. **For further information on tours please contact the Central Tours Office on x3003.**

The Clock Tower and Big Ben

You may arrange for a tour of the Clock Tower. Special security requirements must be met.

There are 334 stairs and no lifts. Tours take about an hour and are free of charge, but are limited and early booking is recommended. **For further information and to book a tour, please contact x4862.**

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 organises a large visits programme which involves Members meeting school groups from their constituencies. There is a travel subsidy available to schools travelling long distances. The service also provides a wide range of free resources which you can make use of in your own work with schools. **For further information on school visits please contact the Education Service on x4496.**

Public Gallery

The Admission Order Office is responsible for issuing tickets for the galleries of the House of Commons. It is located just off the Central Lobby behind the statue of Gladstone. You have an automatic allocation of two tickets every eleven sittings days (excluding Fridays) which are posted six days in advance, unless you have requested the Admission Order Office to hold your tickets. The Public Gallery allocation list is available from the Admission Order Office. **For further information on your ticket allocation please contact the Admission Order Office on x3700.**

Catering



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, Members' Tea Room and Members' Smoking Room. You may also book a variety of meeting rooms across the Parliamentary Estate. A list of catering outlets, their contact numbers and opening hours are listed on the intranet.

Tea and coffee

Palace of Westminster:
Members' Tea Room
Jubilee Café
Pugin Room
Members' Smoking Room
Moncrieff's Café Bar
Portcullis House:
The Adjournment
The Despatch box
7 Millbank:
6th Floor Café

Light lunch

Palace of Westminster:
Terrace Cafeteria
Moncrieff's Café Bar
Moncrieff's self-service
Portcullis House:
The Debate
1 Parliament Street:
Bellamy's self-service
7 Millbank:
Portcullis Cafeteria

Lunch and Dinner (Waiter service)

Palace of Westminster:
Members' Dining Room
Strangers' Dining Room
Churchill Grill Room
Portcullis House:
The Adjournment



Further information on the full range of services is available from the following:

■ Members' Centre in Portcullis House

All you need in one location:

- enquiries and information on any House service
- advice and assistance with ICT issues and equipment
- bookings for rooms and events
- access to PCs, wi-fi, newspapers and other business centre facilities
- access to House leaflets and publications

■ Parliamentary intranet and Online Members' Centre

The parliamentary intranet supports you in your parliamentary work by providing the information and services you need in ways that are simple to access and use.

The Online Members' Centre brings together the pages you and your staff use most frequently. It includes the latest parliamentary business and research resources, as well as information such as maps, menus and room bookings. It features regular parliamentary news, and provides links to content elsewhere on the intranet, Parliament's public website, the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority and some trusted third party sites.

You can also access key services from the Online Members' Centre using your mobile phone. For details of how to connect from a mobile device, visit the Commons Online Members' Centre and follow the instructions.

During the post-election period, the Online Members' Centre will also host the new Members' induction programme, featuring an online booking service, presentations and podcasts.

Online Members' Centre: intranet.parliament.uk/hoc-omc.

Contact the Web Centre on x2010 or by email intranet@parliament.uk.

■ Members' Handbook

The authoritative guide to the facilities offered to you by the House Service. You will receive a copy of the handbook in hard copy and electronically. The handbook is also available in hard copy from the Members' Centre and online.