

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL POLLING AND DIGITAL MEDIA
CALL FOR EVIDENCE**

The House of Lords Select Committee on Political Polling and Digital Media was appointed on 29 June 2017. The remit of the Committee is “to consider the effects of political polling and digital media on politics”.

The Committee membership is Baroness Coultie, Baroness Fall, Baroness Ford, Lord Foulkes of Cumnock, Lord Hayward, Lord Howarth of Newport, Baroness Janke, Baroness Jay of Paddington, Lord Lipsey (Chairman), Baroness O’Neill of Bengarve, Lord Rennard and Lord Smith of Hindhead.

The Committee will explore the following key issues and would welcome your views on the following questions. Please note that questions are not listed here in any order of importance.

The final report and recommendations of the Committee will focus on polling in the United Kingdom. However, the Committee is interested in receiving evidence setting out international comparisons where appropriate and relevant.

This is a public call for written evidence to be submitted to the Committee. The deadline is 1 September 2017.

Polling methods and accuracy

1. What are the most significant challenges for conducting political opinion polling and achieving accurate results? What measures could be taken which might improve the accuracy of political opinion polling?
2. How does the accuracy of political opinion polling compare to other forms of opinion surveys, such as polling on behalf of advocacy groups or official surveys?
3. What new methods have had the most impact on political opinion polling? Can technological innovation help to improve the accuracy of polling? What is your assessment of polls that produce constituency level estimates of voting intention?
4. Does the public have confidence in the accuracy of political opinion polls? How, if at all, has public confidence in the accuracy of opinion polls changed?
5. Can polls be influenced by those who commission them and, if so, in what ways? What controls are there on the output of results, for example to prevent ‘cherry picking’ of results?

Influence of polls

6. What impact do political opinion polls have on voters, politicians and political parties during election campaigns? To what extent does the publication of voting intention polls affect voters' decisions, for example, in terms of turnout or party choice? What are the implications for election campaigns if polls are inaccurate?

International

7. How does the conduct and accuracy of political opinion polling in the UK compare internationally? Are there lessons to be learnt for polling in the UK from other political contexts?

Regulation

8. Is the polling industry's current model of self-regulation fit for purpose? Is there a case for changing the way political opinion polling is regulated? What regulatory changes, if any, would you recommend and what challenges are there to greater regulation?
9. Are there lessons to be learned for the regulation of UK political polling from other countries and political contexts? For example, should the publication of political opinion polls be restricted in the run-up to elections and referendums?
10. Should there be more transparency of the use of private polling by financial institutions? Does such polling require further regulation?

Media coverage of polling

11. Does the media report on opinion polls appropriately? What steps could be taken to improve how the media reports the results of political opinion polls? For example, should standards be set in relation to the reporting of political opinion polls, or should a code of conduct be introduced?
12. Has increased media demand for political opinion polls, or the speed of their reporting, had an impact on accuracy?

Digital and social media

13. What impact is the increased use of digital media channels having on the way in which the public engages with political opinion polling? How is political opinion polling shared across social media platforms and what impact does social media have on the accuracy and reliability of political opinion polling?
14. Can social media and other new forms of data successfully predict election outcomes? What are the challenges associated with using new forms of data to predict elections?

Written evidence should be submitted online using the written submission form available at www.parliament.uk/political-polling-digital-media-submission-form

If you do not have access to a computer you may submit a paper copy to: Clerk to the Select Committee on Political Polling and Digital Media, Committee Office, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW.

The deadline for written evidence is 1 September 2017.

Short, concise submissions, of no more than six pages, are preferred. A longer submission must include a one-page summary. Paragraphs should be numbered. Submissions should be dated, with a note of the author's name, and of whether the author is acting on an individual or corporate basis. All submissions made through the written submission form will be acknowledged automatically by email.

Personal contact details supplied to the Committee will be removed from submissions before publication but will be retained by the Committee staff for specific purposes relating to the Committee's work, such as seeking additional information.

Submissions become the property of the Committee which will decide whether to accept them as evidence. Evidence may be published by the Committee at any stage. It will normally appear on the Committee's website and will be deposited in the Parliamentary Archives. Once you have received acknowledgement that your submission has been accepted as evidence, you may publicise or publish it yourself, but in doing so you must indicate that it was prepared for the Committee. If you publish your evidence separately, you should be aware that you will be legally responsible for its content.

You should be careful not to comment on individual cases currently before a court of law, or matters in respect of which court proceedings are imminent. If you anticipate such issues arising, you should discuss with the Clerk of the Committee how this might affect your submission.

Certain individuals and organisations may be invited to appear in person before the Committee to give oral evidence. Oral evidence is usually given in public at Westminster and broadcast in audio and online. Persons invited to give oral evidence will be notified separately of the procedure to be followed and the topics likely to be discussed.

Substantive communications to the Committee about the inquiry should be addressed through the Clerk, whether or not they are intended to constitute formal evidence to the Committee.

This is a public call for evidence. Please bring it to the attention of other groups and individuals who may not have received a copy direct. You can follow the progress of the inquiry at <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/political-polling-digital-media/>.