Introduction

The House of Lords Library was founded in 1826 to provide a collection of reference and law books to aid Members in their parliamentary work. Today, the Library provides impartial, authoritative and timely research and information services in support of the work of the House. Resources include 80,000 books, parliamentary papers, 200 journals and 50 electronic databases. The Library publishes over 300 briefings covering every major item of business on the floor of the House each year, and completes short fact-finding and longer research enquiries. We have a variety of roles in the Library. You can find out more about many of them in this leaflet. The Library is committed to increasing diversity and maintaining an inclusive workplace culture. I look forward to your application.

Patrick M Vollmer, LLM
Librarian
Roles and Responsibilities of Library staff

The Library is split into three areas of work: Information Provision, composed of researchers and librarians who complete enquiries and briefings for Members and manage the front-of-house service; Information Management, composed of librarians who develop and manage the collection of books, materials and electronic databases and provide coaching to support independent access to information resources; and Central, composed of support staff who assist the Librarian in the strategic and financial management of the Library.

Roles in Information Provision

Head of Research Services

The Head of Research Services leads a team of 20 staff who answer enquiries submitted by Members of the Lords and produce briefings for debates and bills before the House. Tasks include ensuring enquiries and briefings continue to meet expected levels of quality through setting standards and providing overall editorial control of output.

Researchers (Clerks and Research Assistants)

Library Clerks and Research Assistants are recruited to answer questions from Members about issues across the public policy spectrum. They produce impartial, authoritative briefings to inform Members about bills and debates before the House of Lords. Many of these are available from www.researchbriefings.parliament.uk. Research Assistants compile the Current Affairs Digest, a monthly
summary of articles from the Library’s journal subscriptions, from blogs and magazines, speeches and think tanks.

Both Library Clerks and Research Assistants are recruited as generalists (rather than subject specialists) and are required to have a set of sharp research skills, including the ability to source information, sift and analyse large volumes of evidence and write impartial, authoritative briefings to strict deadlines.

Reference Enquiries Manager and Assistant Librarians

The Reference Enquiries Manager coordinates and delivers the reference enquiries service. This includes the issue of book loans, finding documents and answering short, fact-finding enquiries from Members of the House, using a range of sources both within and outside of the Library’s collections. The Reference Enquiries Manager and Assistant Librarians are qualified librarians, and are recruited for their customer service and enquiry answering skills.

Production Support Staff

Research publications are produced with the crucial support of a small team of staff. The Production Manager schedules the publication of all briefings, ensuring deadlines are set for every stage of the process, and manages the final edit, publication and printing of documents to ensure they meet the Library’s required standards for quality. The role of the Library Research and Information Support Manager includes collecting and compiling metrics on the activity of the Library to inform decision-making and completing the production of Library publications.
Roles in Information Management

Head of Information Management

The Head of Information Management’s responsibilities include: setting the strategic direction for the work-stream, working as part of the Library’s Senior Management Team, pursuing corporate information management objectives and overseeing the development of library systems and policies that effectively and efficiently support the delivery of services to users and offer value for money.

Managers

Within the Information Management work-stream there are three managerial roles.

The Resources and Collections Librarian is responsible for leading on collection management and development of the Library’s information resources, print and digital.

The Technical Services Librarian is responsible for ensuring access to the Library’s materials, both print and digital, through management of the team responsible for cataloguing, serials, acquisitions and indexing, and the Library Management System.

The Collections Project Manager takes responsibility for managing the impact of the Restoration and Renewal Programme on the House of Lords Library, with regard to the decant of the collection from the Palace of Westminster and the temporary Library location during restoration.

Assistant Librarians (Resources and Collections)

There are Assistant and Senior Assistant Librarian roles, with responsibilities that include: resource selection, collection care, incident management and stock management. All roles involve some reference enquiry service work as part of a rota. All roles require qualified librarians, and post-holders are recruited for their professional skills and experience.
Assistant Librarians (Technical Services)

There are Assistant and Senior Assistant Librarian roles with responsibilities that include: acquisitions, cataloguing, indexing, serials management and systems administration. All roles involve some reference enquiry service work as part of a rota. All roles require qualified librarians, and post-holders are recruited for their professional skills and experience.

Assistant Librarian (Training)

The Senior Assistant Librarian (Training) is responsible for providing coaching services for Members, Library staff and other users, promoting awareness and effective use of print and online resources, and collating responses and feedback on training services and resource provision to inform the Library’s objectives and policies in these areas. The role also involves some reference enquiry service work as part of a rota. The role requires a qualified librarian, and post-holders are recruited for their professional skills and experience.

Library Assistants

The Senior Library Assistant’s responsibilities include day-to-day management of newspapers, including monitoring receipt and liaising with suppliers, budget administration of office supplies, and providing guidance and supervision to the team of Library Assistants. The Library Assistants’ responsibilities include: checking in serials, mail distribution, shelving and retrieval of material, collecting and distributing parliamentary papers and participating in small-scale projects, such as book moves or collection weeding.
Roles in the Central Team

The Central Team supports the Librarian, and has roles at different grades. Work focusses on governance, finance, policy and business support.

Senior Assistant Librarian (Finance)

The Senior Assistant Librarian (Finance) assists the Librarian with the administration of financial processes, documents processes and procedures, and advises on policy in relation to budgets, as well as on wider issues.

Executive Assistant

The Executive Assistant supports the Librarian with policy and governance documentation, internal communications, administrative support for management meetings, co-ordinating bespoke events and visits and a number of high level administrative tasks including acting as Record Officer for the Library. The role also encompasses managing the Director of Library Services’ diary and emails, liaising with Members, colleagues across Parliament and external stakeholders. The EA is line manager for the Library Administrator.

Library Administrator

The Library Administrator supports the Information Provision, Information Management and Central workstreams by providing administrative support, for example: publishing Library products, minuting meetings, supporting outreach events, booking travel and other administrative tasks as required.
Profiles

Nicola Newson
Senior Library Clerk

As a generalist researcher, I write briefings to help Members prepare for debates in the House of Lords. These could be about legislation as it’s going through Parliament or about current affairs topics. I also answer individual research enquiries from Members to help them with their parliamentary work. This could range from a general background briefing on a subject to answering specific questions about a policy area. I manage more junior researchers and edit colleagues’ work. Another part of my role is to provide policy support to the Librarian I joined the House of Lords in 2009. Before that I worked for the Economist Group, the civil service and in NHS administration. I have Master’s degrees in Modern Languages and in International Studies, and professional qualifications in translation and journalism.

James Goddard
Library Research Assistant

As a Library Research Assistant, I answer bespoke research enquiries received from Members of the House of Lords. I also write Library briefings, which are more substantial publications focused on a particular policy area or piece of parliamentary business, available for use by all Members of the House. I am also one of the authors of the Library’s Current Affairs Digest, a monthly publication which summarises recent articles, blog posts and academic research which
we hope will be of interest to Members. Before my appointment to the House of Lords Library I worked in a number of social science and politics libraries, at London Metropolitan University and prior to that at the London School of Economics. I have an undergraduate degree in Anthropology and a postgraduate degree in Government, Policy and Politics.

John Greenhead
Technical Services Librarian

I am the Technical Services Librarian, managing six staff. My team are responsible for the purchase and cataloguing of the Library’s stock, the maintenance of our automated Library Management System, which supports our online catalogue, and also the indexing of deposited papers. These are documents which are sent to the parliamentary libraries by government departments as a result of questions, statements or debates in either House, and they are published online and made available to the public. I joined the Library in 2006 as an Assistant Librarian responsible for cataloguing, and was appointed to my current post in 2013. My first degree was in History, and I have a Master’s in Library and Information Studies.

Catherine Towey
Senior Assistant Librarian Collection Management

The main purpose of my role is to help ensure the Library’s collections are managed effectively.
and maintain relevance to the parliamentary work of Members. My tasks include overseeing a programme of collection reviews, planning and implementing stock moves and re-organisation and managing the Library’s collection care activities. Although much of my work goes on behind-the-scenes I also help to staff the reference desk, answering enquiries for Members and staff of the House. I have worked with the wonderful collections in the Lords Library for over six years, and prior to this worked in the collection care department at the London Library. I hold a degree in Art History and following completion of a graduate trainee year at the National Art Library, I studied for an MA in Library and Information Studies at UCL, qualifying as a librarian in 2008.

Amanda Protheroe
Library Assistant

I work in a team of four Library Assistants, and although we have varying roles our jobs overlap and we work together to ensure there is a prompt and efficient service for staff and Members. My tasks include the checking-in of journals, their distribution and filing, post, book moves, checking stock and much more. In the Palace Library, Millbank House e-Library and at off-site storage areas, we carry out a check of our collections and work with many staff of the Library to keep records up-to-date and identify potential problems. I joined the House of Lords in 2002 and gained a CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) certification in 2014.
Find out more


www.parliament.uk/about/working/

houseoflordsjobs.engageats.co.uk/

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