Chapter 1: Introduction to the House of Commons

1. About the House of Commons

1.1 Staff of the House of Commons are employed by the House of Commons Commission. The House of Lords and the Parliamentary Digital Service are each separate employers.

2. About this Handbook

2.1 The House of Commons Staff Handbook sets out essential information for staff and provides a guide to terms and conditions of employment. It should be read together with letters of appointment, Staff Notices and other documents, and it may be amended from time to time.

2.2 A glossary of abbreviations is available on the intranet.

2.3 Where the Handbook refers to a particular post holder and they are unavailable another suitable post holder will be appointed.

2.4 The House of Commons Commission reserves the right to vary procedures and arrangements as it deems appropriate. Generally, managers should follow House policies and procedures as outlined in the Handbook. However, there will be circumstances where a particular case does not lend itself to the procedures as described and in these cases some variation may be justified. In these circumstances managers should discuss alternative approaches with the HR Advisory Service. These should be alternative methods of reaching an outcome, aligned with the stated policy and procedures as far as reasonably practicable and developed with due regard to the rights of employees.

Staff Groups

2.5 A list of the pay bands and associated salary ranges is on the Intranet:

Pay bands and associated salary ranges

Senior Commons Structure (SCS) and Catering Services staff

2.6 If you are a member of SCS or Catering Services staff you will have some different terms and conditions of service. Any differences are usually identified in your letter of appointment.

A-E pay bands

2.7 The majority of staff at the House of Commons are in posts in the A-E pay bands. These pay bands are defined using the JEGS job evaluation system.
Employees from newly-acquired businesses

2.8 Some people have transferred to the House of Commons from a previous employer and retained certain terms and conditions from their previous organisation at the point of transfer. The provisions of this handbook do not all apply to these individuals and managers should seek specific advice from the HR Advisory Service about managing transferred staff as needed. Areas currently affected are Metropolitan Police Service, Fire Service and TSO pay bands.

Parliamentary Digital Service

2.9 The Parliamentary Digital Service is a bicameral office serving both Houses as the provider of Digital and Technology services. The service works with the administrations of both Houses to build infrastructure and systems that enable Parliament to work effectively and to connect with the public. It also provides equipment and support to Members, Members’ staff and staff of both Houses.

2.10 Differences between the terms and conditions of House of Commons and Parliamentary Digital Services staff are given in Annex 1 of the Staff Handbook.

3. Contact Points for Further Information

3.1 If you need more information about anything in this Handbook or have any queries about your own conditions of service, you should contact your Line Manager in the first instance. Other sources of information or support around particular policies are listed in the relevant sections of this Handbook.

4. Trades Unions

4.1 Recognised Trade Unions in the House of Commons are consulted before the introduction of changes to conditions of service, about the future development of policies and about other particular issues as they arise. Health and Safety representatives are also consulted as appropriate.

4.2 The system for working with recognised Trade Unions is described in chapter 7.

4.3 Trades Unions provide advice to their members and represent them, on request, in their dealings with their employer. Staff are encouraged to join the appropriate Trade Union at the earliest opportunity.

4.4 The Trade Union Side Administrator (TUSA) can provide further information about the recognised trades unions or direct members to appropriate representatives. They can be contacted at tusa@parliament.uk or on ext. 5611.