

## UK Gender-Sensitive Parliament Audit 2018.

*Report of the gender-sensitive Parliament audit panel  
to the House of Commons Commission and the  
House of Lords Commission.*



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## **Membership**

The audit panel was established by the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions. The membership was as follows:

- Lord Carlile of Berriew
- David Clark, Head of Education and Engagement, UK Parliament
- Vicky Ford MP
- Lynn Gardner, Principal Clerk, Select Committees, House of Commons
- Baroness Grender
- Baroness Grey-Thompson
- Benet Hiscock, Director of Communications, House of Lords
- Ranil Jayawardena MP
- Gavin Shuker MP
- Alison Thewliss MP
- Baroness Thornton
- Philippa Tudor, Clerk of Committees, House of Lords

## **Facilitator**

The audit was facilitated by Zeina Hilal, Gender Programme, Inter-Parliamentary Union.

## **Secretariat**

The secretariat was drawn from officials from across the two House Administrations: Sarah Petit, Dominique Gracia and Kerry O'Loughlin, with additional support from Chloe Challender, Karina Curtis, Simona Dell'Agli, Sarah Kerr and Frances Thompson.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2018 we have marked the centenaries of the Representation of People Act 1918 and the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act 1918, as well as the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act 1928, and the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Life Peerages Act 1958. Celebrations of women's representation in Parliament have taken place alongside debate about continued barriers to participation (some of which also affect men), brought into sharp focus in the report of Dame Laura Cox into the bullying and harassment of House of Commons staff, published two weeks before we undertook our audit.

Our panel was established by the Commissions of both Houses to examine how Parliament as an institution might respond to this debate, by conducting the UK's first Gender-Sensitive Parliament audit.

For the first time Parliament has examined - and hereby publishes together in one place - a range of data on the number of female MPs, peers and Administration staff; the number of women in leadership positions; the culture, environment and policies of Parliament from a gender-perspective; and how Parliament takes account of gender issues in its work.

In our report, we welcome the steady progress that has been made to increase the proportion of female MPs to 32% and female peers to 26%. However, we note that a number of barriers remain to equal female representation in Parliament, including:

- The culture of Parliament as highlighted in recent reports of bullying and harassment, and sexual harassment;
- The challenges that working in Parliament poses for family life, including the unpredictability of business and potential long hours;
- The financial impact of standing for Parliament; and
- Online threats and threats to physical security, in particular gender-based intimidation, harassment and violence against female Parliamentarians and female candidates.

We make a number of recommendations to address these barriers, including concrete action in response to the report of Dame Laura Cox on the bullying and harassment of House staff and forthcoming reports on the experiences of Lords staff, Members' staff and Members; more predictability of Parliamentary business; and a new Parliamentary policy on children and families.

We note that, in general terms, once women have arrived in Parliament there does not appear to be a barrier to them obtaining leadership positions in either House; although we recommend establishing a single, transparent process for the appointment of peers on to select committees and draw attention to the lack of diversity in the Panel of Chairs. More generally, we propose a mechanism by which Parliament can monitor the gender breakdown of MPs and peers and publish the results.

Although Parliament has processes in place that allow it to take account of gender issues in its legislative and scrutiny functions, we propose measures to bring together the various sources of advice and expertise available to Parliamentarians and to ensure that select committees are proactive in looking beyond the "usual suspects" to include women's voices. Finally, we welcome the initiatives undertaken by both Houses to improve the diversity of staff but note that the current pace of change to increase the number of women in senior positions in the House of Lords Administration in particular (21%) is unacceptable.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Background

1. In 2018 we have marked the centenaries of the Representation of People Act 1918 and the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act 1918, as well as the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act 1928, and the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Life Peerages Act 1958. Celebrations of women's representation in Parliament have taken place alongside debate about continued barriers to participation (some of which also affect men), brought into sharp focus in the report of Dame Laura Cox into the bullying and harassment of House of Commons staff, published two weeks before we undertook our audit.
2. The Commissions of both Houses agreed in spring 2018 that it would be fitting for the UK Parliament to hold its first bicameral gender-sensitive Parliament audit during this centenary year, using a self-assessment toolkit developed by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).<sup>1</sup> By working through that toolkit, the audit would make recommendations to be taken forward by the appropriate bodies, coordinated by the two Commissions.
3. The IPU has defined a gender-sensitive Parliament as one that:
  - Promotes and achieves equality in numbers of women and men across all of its bodies and internal structures;
  - Develops a gender equality policy framework suited to its own national parliamentary context;
  - Mainstreams gender equality throughout all of its work;
  - Fosters an internal culture that respects women's rights, promotes gender equality, and responds both to the realities of parliamentarians' lives – those of men and women – and to their need to balance work and family responsibilities;
  - Acknowledges and builds on the contribution made by its men members who pursue and advocate gender equality;
  - Encourages political parties to take a proactive role in the promotion and achievement of gender equality; and
  - Equips its parliamentary staff with the capacity and resources to promote gender equality, actively encourages the recruitment and retention of women to senior positions, and ensures that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout the work of the parliamentary administration.
4. Parliaments can adapt the IPU toolkit to their own context, and the particular aims of our audit, as set by the two Commissions, were to:
  - a. Take stock of how gender-sensitive the UK Parliament is, highlighting successes and identifying areas for improvement;
  - b. Identify any data gaps in relation to our gender sensitivity and how we might plug these to gain a more detailed picture of how diverse and inclusive Parliament is;
  - c. Reflect on how best practices might be implemented or adapted to the UK Parliament or one or either of the Houses;
  - d. Produce concrete recommendations to be put to the appropriate actors; and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/handbooks/2016-11/evaluating-gender-sensitivity-parliaments-self-assessment-toolkit>

- e. Identify lessons from any progress made in relation to sex that might be applied to other protected characteristics.

### How we conducted our work

5. We carried out our work via facilitated discussions over the course of the week beginning 29 October 2018, based on data collected or produced by officials from across both Houses over the summer of 2018. This data<sup>2</sup> included:
  - Statistical data from the database of MPs and peers and from the Human Resources departments of each House Administration;
  - Factual data about the policies and procedures of the two Houses, and the services provided by the House Administrations;
  - Extracts from relevant research studies, including surveys of members; and
  - Anonymised feedback from a focus group of members of Parligender (one of the workplace equality networks) undertaken to inform the audit.
6. Within the time available to us, we focused on the data which struck us as particularly worthy of comment, seeking to make practical recommendations that would remove barriers to full participation in the work of Parliament on the grounds of gender and are within Parliament's power to implement.<sup>3</sup> We therefore did not give detailed consideration to all of the data but append it to our report nonetheless.
7. We agreed our report by consensus at a meeting held on 26 November.
8. **Our report reflects the data we reviewed, as well as our own experiences and those of the colleagues with whom we have discussed these issues. We are aware that experiences vary and are careful in our report not to make sweeping generalisations. We strongly recommend that, in developing an action plan in response to the report, the Commissions consult widely across Parliament on how our recommendations might best be implemented.**
9. We commend our report to the Commissions of both Houses.

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<sup>2</sup> The majority of data currently available to us on the gender identities of those who work in or interact with Parliament is binary (i.e. it classifies people as either male or female), and accordingly the audit was conducted on this basis.

<sup>3</sup> Decisions about how the two Houses and its committees conducts their business and/or the services provided by the two House Administrations are made by a number of different actors, including the two Houses themselves, the two Speakers, two Commissions and the domestic committees, the two Liaison Committees, and the Commons Executive Committee and Lords Management Board. We use the term "parliamentary authorities" in our report as the collective term for these actors.

## CHAPTER 2: NUMBERS AND POSITIONS OF MPS AND PEERS

10. In our discussions on this issue, we considered the current level of representation of female MPs and peers; the percentage of female MPs and peers in leadership positions and on select committees; and how MPs and peers are appointed or selected for these roles. We also considered whether mechanisms are in place to guarantee a certain level of representation and how representation is monitored.

### Numbers of MPs and peers

11. As at 15 June 2018, there were 209 women elected as MPs, 32% of the total membership.<sup>4</sup> The number of women MPs has increased at each election over the past 30 years, except for a small drop between 1997 and 2001 (see Appendices 1 and 3).
12. The choice of prospective parliamentary candidates rests with the local parties. At the 2017 General Election, 29% of candidates were women (see Appendix 5). Research shows that there are a range of reasons why women may not put themselves up for election and why local parties may select predominantly male candidates.<sup>5</sup>
13. There were 207 women in the House of Lords as at October 2018, 26% of the total membership. Similarly to the Commons, the proportion of women in the membership has steadily increased over the past 20 years (see Appendices 2 and 4). There are four means of entry into the House of Lords:<sup>6</sup>
- Life peers appointed under the Life Peerages Act 1958 (the vast majority);
  - Peers appointed under the Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1976, who are disqualified from taking up their seats in the House whilst they remain sitting judges but are entitled to take up their seats upon retirement;
  - 92 positions held by hereditary peers under the House of Lords Act 1999; and
  - 26 positions held by archbishops and bishops.<sup>7</sup>
14. The independent House of Lords Appointments Commission makes recommendations for non-party-political life peers and vets party nominations for life peerages for propriety. The recommendations for non-party-political life peers must take into account “the impact of an individual’s nomination on the composition and balance of the House as a whole, in relation to the range of expertise, experience and outlook and the spread of gender, age, ethnic background and geographical representation”. Since its establishment in 2000, 36% of their appointments have been women; however, it has been noted that the applications it receives from men far exceed the number from women. The gender imbalance in party-political appointments may be in part a historical legacy of the lower levels of representation of women in the Commons, given the number of appointees who are former MPs, although it is difficult to establish a clear cause and effect in this regard. We would urge party leadership to give proper consideration to the case for more balanced gender representation when considering recommendations for life peerages.

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<sup>4</sup> This is one more woman MP than was elected at the last General Election because of by-election changes since June 2017.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, House of Commons *Speakers Conference (on Parliamentary Representation)*, HC 239, 11 January 2010

<sup>6</sup> For a fuller overview, see House of Lords website, ‘*How Members are Appointed*’

<sup>7</sup> Since 2015, the Lords Spiritual (Women) Act 2015 has provided for any vacancy arising to be filled by a female diocesan bishop ahead of any male.

15. **We welcome the steady progress that has been made to increase the proportion of female MPs and peers, but note that a number of barriers remain to equal female representation in Parliament.**
16. Political parties, the various actors involved in the appointment of peers, and Parliament as an institution all have a role to play in addressing these barriers. Our discussions focused on the role of Parliament, in accordance with the scope of our audit.
17. **The following factors appeared to us to be particularly noteworthy in putting women off standing as an MP or putting themselves forward to the House of Lords Appointments Commission:**
  - a. **The culture of Parliament as highlighted in recent reports of bullying and harassment, and sexual harassment;**
  - b. **The challenges that working in Parliament poses for family life, including the unpredictability of business and potential long hours (with measures to date tending to benefit those who live in and around London);**
  - c. **The financial impact of standing for Parliament (particularly for disabled candidates); and**
  - d. **Online threats and threats to physical security, in particular gender-based intimidation, harassment and violence against female parliamentarians and female candidates.**
18. **We also recognise that some of these factors are an issue for women and men, and that they can also affect individuals from diverse backgrounds to different degrees. We think that this only lends weight to the argument that they should be tackled.**
19. **We recommend in Chapter 3 a series of actions that should be taken by Parliament in response to factors a, b and d above to: address fundamentally the concerns about bullying and harassment highlighted in recent reports; make parliamentary life better for families; and support parliamentarians who experience threats.**
20. **Campaign financing (factor c) is not a matter for the parliamentary authorities. However, we are aware of efforts by the Government to reduce financial barriers for disabled candidates via the Access to Elected Office Fund, and we consider there should be a further extension of this scheme beyond summer 2019.**
21. **Although attracting candidates is predominantly a matter for political parties or the House of Lords Appointments Commission, we believe there is a role for the Education and Engagement Team, the two Communications teams, and the Parliamentary Digital Service in demonstrating visibly that people from all backgrounds are welcome, including:**
  - a. **Greater engagement with organisations supporting the increased diversity and inclusivity of Parliament;**
  - b. **Continuing existing efforts to make the parliamentary website more accessible and inclusive; and**

- c. Ensuring outreach and social media activity captures the work of parliamentarians in all their diversity (this is explored further in Chapter 3).**

### **Leadership positions in the House of Commons and House of Lords**

22. Leadership positions in the two Houses have been defined as the Speakers and Deputy Speakers, members of the two Commissions, and committee chairs. Party leadership positions have been excluded.

#### *House of Commons*

23. Appendix 6 provides a breakdown by gender of the leadership positions in the House of Commons, as at 15 June 2018.
24. The Speaker and Deputy Speakers chair debates in the Commons Chamber, as well as carrying out other roles in the Administration. They are elected by the House. Standing Orders have, since 2010, provided for a woman to be included across the four elected positions of Speaker and Deputies – “at least one man and at least one woman shall be elected across the four posts of Speaker and Deputy Speakers”.
25. The House of Commons Commission has statutory responsibility for the running of the House Administration, including the employment of staff and laying the Estimate. It is required by statute to comprise seven parliamentary members (including the *ex officio* positions of Speaker, Leader and a member nominated by the Leader of the Opposition; and four further MPs whose nominations via the usual channels are formally approved by the House), two external members and two officials. Although there are no formal mechanisms to ensure a gender balance, the Commission is broadly gender-balanced at present.
26. Members of the Panel of Chairs are nominated by the Speaker to chair general committees, which are established on an *ad hoc* basis, primarily to undertake scrutiny of primary and secondary legislation, and to chair Westminster Hall. The Panel consists of the three Deputy Speakers and “no fewer than ten” MPs appointed by the Speaker. At the time our data was collected, its membership was 22% female.
27. The majority of select committee chairs are self-nominated candidates elected by the whole House, with the remainder elected from within the relevant committee membership (usually agreed by the “usual channels” in advance). The percentage of female chairs of select committees<sup>8</sup> is 28%.

#### *House of Lords*

28. The gender of current holders of senior leadership positions in the House of Lords, as at 15 June 2018, is detailed in Appendix 7. There are no formal mechanisms to ensure a gender balance across any of these appointments in the Lords.

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<sup>8</sup> Those committees represented on the Liaison Committee.

29. Although two of the three elected Lord Speakers have been female, the three most senior positions – Lord Speaker, Senior Deputy Speaker, and Chairman of the European Union Committee – are currently held by men. The panel of Deputy Speakers, which usually comprises between 20 and 25 deputies who assist the Lord Speaker in presiding over the sittings of the House, consisted of 14 men and ten women as at 15 June 2018.
30. The House of Lords Commission provides high-level strategic and political direction for the House of Lords Administration on behalf of the House. It comprises ten parliamentary members (including, *ex officio*, the Lord Speaker and Senior Deputy Speaker, leaders of the parties and groups in the Lords, including the Crossbench Convenor, and the chairs of the Finance and Services Committees), and two external members (including, *ex officio*, the chair of the Audit Committee).
31. The proportion of female members of the Commission is greater than the proportion of female members in the House: four of the ten parliamentary members of the Commission were female as at 15 June 2018. However, the proportion of female chairs of committees is smaller than the proportion of female members in the House: six of the 32 committees (19%) have female chairs.
32. **When we compare the proportion of women in leadership positions in the Commons and Lords against the proportion of female MPs and peers, there does not seem to be a particular obstacle to either women or men taking up these positions.**
33. **One exception is the Panel of Chairs in the Commons. Although we believe that to achieve gender parity the focus should be on removing barriers for women to take up positions of leadership in Parliament, rather than on quotas or targets, we note that it would be straightforward for the Panel of Chairs to be made more diverse over time, as decisions about membership lie within the gift of the Speaker.**

#### *Committee membership*

34. In the Commons, committee membership is recommended by the Selection Committee and approved by the House. In practice, that committee acts as a vehicle for nominations made by the political groupings, some of which arise from an internal election within the party. With the exception of the EU Statutory Instruments Committee, there are no requirements for gender balance.
35. In the Lords, committee membership is recommended by the Committee of Selection and approved by the House. In practice, that committee acts as a vehicle for nominations made by the parties and groups. There are no requirements for gender balance.
36. Four of the 36 Commons select committees (Women and Equalities, Education, EU Statutory Instruments, Commons members of JCHR) have more female than male members. However, four others (Finance, Transport, International Development, Selection) have just one female member.
37. Three of the 32 Lords committees (Lords members of JCHR, Communications and Intergenerational Fairness) have more female than male members. However, three others (Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform, Standing Orders (Private Bills)

and Hybrid Instruments) have one female member or none. (A full breakdown of House of Commons and Lords committees by gender can be found in Appendices 8 and 9.)

38. We hold different views as to whether very gender-unbalanced committees are by definition problematic, but we note their potential to both reinforce the public perception that Parliament is not a place for women and provide an uncomfortable environment for female witnesses giving evidence to them.
39. We found that the position was different for women seeking committee membership in the Commons and Lords. In the Commons, women did not appear to struggle to get a place on committees on which they expressed an interest. A requirement for a 50:50 gender balance on all committees would place too great a burden on female MPs, while women remain under-represented in the Commons.
40. In the Lords, however, concerns were raised that women may lose out on places owing to apparent patronage, as the process for getting onto a committee was not very transparent. A lack of turnover in select committee membership might also act as an additional barrier to increasing the gender balance of committees.
41. **In the Commons, there does not appear to be a barrier to women joining select committees (apart from that of time). Political parties, which organise the informal mechanisms by which committee membership is decided in practice, should routinely assure themselves that women continue to have the same opportunities to serve on committees as men, according to their interest and expertise.**
42. **The system in the Lords, however, was considered to be more reliant on patronage, which tends to discriminate against minority groups. The Lords might therefore consider reforming their system as follows:**
  - a. **Establishing a single, transparent process for nominating committee membership; and**
  - b. **More frequent turnover of committee membership.**
43. **We also recommend the introduction of a general principle that select committees should not meet before 9.30am, so that parliamentarians have an equal opportunity to take part in them, irrespective of childcare responsibilities.**

## Monitoring

44. Our discussions highlighted the importance of monitoring the numbers of MPs and peers, and those in leadership positions in the Commons and Lords, in achieving transparency. The aim of monitoring is to “shine a light”, to encourage those responsible to take action to remove any barriers to entry which may be indicated by the results.
45. There is currently no body dedicated to monitoring the number of women MPs or peers in leadership positions. Information on the gender of MPs and peers and their positions are part of a parliamentary “Members’ Names” database, which we have used to gather data for the audit and is open to the public.<sup>9</sup> We believe that the House

<sup>9</sup> *UK Parliament – Members’ Names Data Platform*

of Lords Appointment Commission undertakes its own monitoring in order to fulfil its duty to consider “the impact of an individual’s nomination on the composition and balance of the House as a whole, in relation to the range of expertise, experience and outlook and the spread of gender, age, ethnic background and geographical representation” but it does not publish the results.

46. **We consider that it would be appropriate for a parliamentary body to monitor the gender breakdown of MPs and peers and those in leadership positions, and to publish the results. We recommend that the Women and Equalities Committee and the Joint Committee on Human Rights should consider exercising their existing power to meet jointly to carry out this task on an annual basis.**
47. **To assist with this monitoring, we add our voice to calls to implement section 106 of the Equality Act 2010, which requires parties to publish data on the diversity of candidates standing for election. This could also be voluntarily extended to include appointments to the Lords, for example by political parties publishing the gender balance of appointment candidates.**
48. **We highlight the importance of intersectionality when discussing gender sensitivity. People’s identities are not one-dimensional. A person’s age, race, sexuality, disability and socio-economic status may also present additional barriers to them entering Parliament, and this should be recognised proactively. One way to help achieve diversity might, for example, be empowering women who already have established careers as well as those who might wish to build their careers within Parliament.**
49. **The House Administrations may wish to consider what data might be collected to allow future audits to take account of the experiences of individuals of other gender identities and greater consideration of intersectionality in discussing people’s experiences in Parliament.**
50. **We recommend that Erskine May should include a new chapter on gender sensitivity in future editions.**

### CHAPTER 3: CULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND POLICIES

51. In our discussions on this issue, we considered the extent to which:
- Parliament’s conditions of work allow MPs, peers and the staff of each Administration to balance work and family obligations;
  - Parliament can be considered a gender-sensitive work space in terms of both facilities and symbolic references such as the artwork on display; and
  - Communications and public outreach policies are gender-sensitive, and whether these policies could better reflect and give visibility to the work of the Parliament on equality.
52. We also decided to hold a separate discussion on bullying and harassment and sexual misconduct, given the seriousness of this issue for the UK Parliament at the time of our audit.

#### **Balancing parliamentary work with family life**

53. Among the MPs who left Parliament in 2015 and were interviewed for a study for the House of Commons Administration Committee, the most common reason given for standing down was the impact being an MP had on family life. This was owing to: the difficulty of the lack of predictability or advance knowledge of business; the long hours the job entailed; and problems associated with splitting time between Parliament and their constituency.<sup>10</sup> Women MPs, who often take the role of lead caregiver to children, said they faced particular challenges as a result.<sup>11</sup>
54. As indicated in the previous chapter, we considered this challenge to be one of the major barriers to women (and some men) entering Parliament.

#### *The number and structure of parliamentary sittings*

55. The UK Parliament sits for more days than many other parliaments in the world.<sup>12</sup> Despite this, there is frequent criticism of the length of parliamentary recesses, particularly when these do not coincide with typical holiday periods.
56. Appendices 11 and 12 provide information on the sitting days and hours of each House. Despite changes to bring the Commons more in line with standard “business hours”, both Houses continue to sit late into the evening on a regular basis. In the Commons, a survey by the Procedure Committee<sup>13</sup> has indicated there is no consensus amongst MPs as to how sitting patterns might best be changed. In part, this is because what might work best for the family of an MP whose constituency is in or around London may be very different for that of an MP who travels from, for example, Scotland to Westminster each week, with their children remaining in the constituency.

<sup>10</sup> HC Administration Committee, *Report to the House of Commons Administration Committee on the findings of the interview study with members on leaving Parliament*, April 2016

<sup>11</sup> Appendix 10 includes the findings of the 2017 parenting survey: MPs’ number of children by gender, undertaken by Professor Rosie Campbell and Professor Sarah Childs

<sup>12</sup> Institute for Government, *Parliamentary Monitor 2018*, September 2018, p 19

<sup>13</sup> Procedure Committee, Sixth Report of Session 2016-17, *Sitting hours of the House: response to a survey of Members*, HC1144 2017

57. The sitting patterns also affect many Administration staff whose working hours are connected to the work of the two chambers. Although staff are entitled to apply for formal provisions for flexible working, there remains a lack of visibility of staff in senior roles who work flexibly, and some staff are unable to do so as they are needed to support the sittings of the House or its committee activity, including committee travel. The extent to which they also affect MPs' and peers' staff depends on the demands placed on them by the parliamentarian for whom they work.
58. Parliamentarians are expected to be in Westminster when the relevant House is sitting, regardless of where their children are based. Parliamentary recesses coincide (roughly speaking) with school holidays in England and Wales. However, there are times when Parliament sits during these holidays, such as the October half-term, and there is less fit with the Scottish and Northern-Irish school calendars.

### *Lack of predictability*

59. Another issue is the lack of predictability in, and advance knowledge of, parliamentary sitting patterns. For example, recess dates in the Commons are currently only announced up until February 2019 (three months hence) and in the Lords until January 2019. The business in each House is usually announced no more than two weeks in advance and, particularly in the Lords where there is no programming of bills, sitting hours can be unpredictable even on the day itself. This can make planning for the care of children or other dependents extremely difficult.
60. One of the factors that affects predictability in the Commons is that divisions may happen at any time: some other parliaments have solved this issue through the establishment of a set time for voting. Another factor is the use of "urgent questions", which are selected shortly before the day's business begins and affect the timing of subsequent business. The House might consider whether some matters currently raised in this way might instead be considered at a set time put aside each week for "important questions".
61. **The challenge of balancing working in Parliament with family life is a fundamental issue. It affects MPs and peers who are parents, as well as older parliamentarians and many Administration, MPs' and peers' staff whose working hours are connected to sittings of the two chambers. Crucially, it also has a profound impact on their families.**
62. **Increasing the predictability of parliamentary business would improve the inclusivity of Parliament and benefit the families of those who work here. It would also give parliamentarians greater scope to focus on their wider parliamentary and constituency duties.**
63. **Recent changes to sitting hours have benefitted MPs who are based in London but not helped those who live further away. We noted, however, that it would be impossible to come up with a set of hours that would work for everyone. Reforms should therefore focus on greater predictability and more efficient use of time.**
64. **As a first step, a review should be undertaken in each House to consider how efficient it is at carrying out its business and assess options for reform such as:**

- a. **More advance notice of the parliamentary calendar, including setting expected sitting days up to a year in advance;**
- b. **More predictability in, and advance notice of, the scheduling of business, including a set time for voting (although the benefits of the current system were noted regarding the potential for MPs to cast their vote in response to arguments made during the debate) and a time set aside for “important questions”;**
- c. **Compressing the sitting week into fewer days;**
- d. **More closely aligning recess dates and school holidays, to increase the ability of members from all parts of the United Kingdom to spend time with their families; and**
- e. **Setting expectations in relation to committee workload, including in relation to consideration of committee reports and the timing of Committee visits.**

#### *Maternity, paternity and adoption leave*

- 65. Unlike Administration staff, parliamentarians are not “employees” and are therefore not eligible for maternity, paternity or adoption leave. Although in practice new parents have taken time away from Parliament, the House of Commons has recognised the need to formalise these arrangements and resolved on 1 February 2018 to allow members absent from the House by reason of maternity, paternity or adoption, to cast a vote in a division by proxy. At the time of agreeing our report, however, the House has still not considered a substantive motion which would bring proxy voting into effect.
- 66. **At the time of agreeing our report, the House of Commons had not yet considered a substantive motion to implement its decision in principle to allow new parents to vote in a division by proxy. Such a motion should be brought forward immediately. MPs taking leave from the House in this way should not be subject to any reduction in their staffing budgets, as the work of their offices is likely, if anything, to increase during this time.**
- 67. **We also consider that the parties should look to reinforce informal pairing arrangements for other caring needs; and recommend that consideration be given by the House of Commons to how, where pairing is used, the members in question might have their vote “by pair” formally recorded.**

#### *Facilities*

- 68. A number of facilities are provided by the parliamentary authorities to help parliamentarians to balance their duties with their caring responsibilities, including a nursery and ad hoc childcare provision (for which users pay the costs of care); and family rooms in both Houses. (Appendix 13 provides more information on the gender-sensitive spaces and facilities currently available on the parliamentary estate.)
- 69. A review was undertaken in 2017 of the potential to establish a crèche on the parliamentary estate. We are disappointed that this was found not to be viable at that time. This absence, coupled with access issues relating to the Family Room in the Commons, means that children are sometimes cared for in a way that can cause concern on safeguarding grounds. The provisions for childcare in the Lords Family Room could also be improved and enhanced.

70. **Developing a parliamentary policy for children and families, informed by good practice in other parliaments, would be an initial first step to a more family-friendly institution and would also address safeguarding concerns. Such a policy should include the following:**
- a. **Clearer guidance on what is allowed, including a provision that infant feeding should be allowed everywhere;**
  - b. **A clear statement of safeguarding issues and expectations around supervision, including consideration of whether children and family members could be passholders; and**
  - c. **An enhanced commitment and joined up approach to the provision of childcare.**
71. **Facilities should be provided which support the policy. We would expect these to include:**
- a. **Better facilities for expressing milk (including for visitors);**
  - b. **Retaining the Family Rooms as dedicated spaces for families but with improvements and more consistent enforcement of their use for these purposes;**
  - c. **Provision for children and family members of different ages (including older children);**
  - d. **An information tool for parents working in Parliament; and**
  - e. **More facilities that support the needs of parliamentarians that stem from unsociable hours.**
72. **Away from the parliamentary estate, we encourage IPSA to give consideration to how the childcare needs of MPs whose family life is unavoidably split between Westminster and their constituency might better be supported. This would be a natural extension of IPSA's recent decision to take account of the different accommodation needs of MPs, which we welcome. IPSA should also give consideration to the means in which these claims are reported, so that no-one in need is deterred from accessing support.**

### **Bullying & harassment, sexual violence and threats to security**

#### *Bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct*

73. In November 2017, in response to allegations of inappropriate behaviour and a culture of bullying and sexual harassment at Westminster, a bicameral Working Group on an Independent Complaints and Grievance Policy (ICGP) was established. (Appendix 22 provides a list of the subsequent actions taken.) The resulting Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme, which has been introduced in the Commons, will be subject to independent review in early 2019 and then again in 2020. In the Lords, the ICGP Scheme has been introduced for House Administration staff, and consideration of the same or similar measures to apply to peers and their staff is under way, with implementation likely to conclude at the end of 2018.

74. In the Commons there has been renewed debate on these issues following the publication *on* 15 October 2018 of a report by Dame Laura Cox into the bullying and harassment of House of Commons staff.<sup>14</sup> Further inquiries have been launched into the experiences of Lords Administration staff, peers and MPs' staff and of MPs themselves. We discussed these issues in the light of Dame Laura's report and a recent report by the IPU on Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in parliaments of Europe.<sup>15</sup>
75. **We note the extreme seriousness of bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct for our Parliament and others around the world. We welcome the focus that is being put on these issues via the report of Dame Laura Cox into the bullying and harassing of House of Commons staff and the establishment of two further inquiries into the experiences of others working in Parliament. Parliament must take the findings and recommendations of these inquiries extremely seriously and take concrete action in response, rather than hiding from the problem.**
76. **The Equality and Human Rights Commission has expressed public concern that due regard may not have been given by the House of Commons authorities to the duties of public authorities under the Equality Act to:**
- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;**
  - **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and**
  - **Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**
- This was exemplified by the report of Dame Laura Cox into the bullying and harassment of House staff, which although only advisory went to the heart of the management of the elected House. We believe that both Houses have a duty to apply to themselves the important and fundamental parts of the Equality Act, including section 19, that they spent so much time discussing.**
77. **In doing so, Parliament should consider how MPs and peers might be supported to ensure they exercise comparable duties towards their own staff; and ensure political parties aren't forgotten.**
78. **We welcome the IPU's new report on *Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in parliaments of Europe*, which provides data and examples of parliamentary good practices.**
79. **In responding to the Cox report, and those of the forthcoming inquiries, the Parliamentary authorities should:**
- a. **Examine what other Parliaments have done, including the examples set out in the IPU's report on *Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in parliaments*, and adopt good practice; and**

<sup>14</sup> Dame Laura Cox, *The Bullying and Harassment of House of Commons Staff*, Oct 2018

<sup>15</sup> IPU, *Sexism, harassment and violence against women in Parliaments in Europe*, October 2018

- b. **Examine the recommendations arising from the Women and Equalities Committee inquiry into sexual harassment and respond to them.**
80. **From our own discussions, measures might include (but not be limited to):**
- a. **Better support for whistle-blowers;**
  - b. **Acknowledging that not all staff will want to report complaints formally, a means by which staff can raise issues, such as via surveys or feedback;**
  - c. **Proactive communication on where members' and Administration staff can seek HR and external forms of support, and making the HR Advisory Service available for MPs in the Customer Hub;**
  - d. **Training for staff on having difficult conversations and for line managers on how to support them;**
  - e. **Support for Administration staff who are required to enforce the rules of the two Houses, such as around pass-wearing; and**
  - f. **Stronger communication about the training that is available for members and all staff. Moreover, noting that all those who hold a parliamentary pass are required to undertake compulsory training on fire safety, passholders should be required to confirm that they have completed a training course on bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment, either via an external provider such as ACAS or an internal course.**
81. **We welcome the new Behaviour Code for Parliament that has been designed to apply to all those working in or visiting Parliament. We recognise, however, the need to ensure the operation of a seamless duty of care for political party staff, regardless of the location in which they are working. We recommend that political parties adopt their own codes with parallel language to ensure consistent treatment of those working in the political arena.**

#### *Threats to security*

82. We identified online abuse and threats to safety, which particularly affect female parliamentarians, as a barrier for women entering Parliament. The parliamentary authorities have taken steps in the last few years to provide more support to parliamentarians in this regard, but it remains a great cause for concern.
83. All MPs have access to recommended security measures for their constituency office and home. Any MP, peer or their staff who has security concerns when away from the estate is advised to contact their local police in the first instance. This includes reporting threats and abuse via the internet and social media. In addition, the police Parliamentary Liaison and Investigation Team has been established to assist all members and all staff with advice on any specific, immediate threat, urgent issues or to discuss general security concerns while on the estate.
84. The Members' Security Support Service is a dedicated and specialised team in Parliament which supports members in accessing security measures for offices and homes. The team can also provide personal security advice to MPs, peers and their staff, including support and advice on social media safety.

85. **We recommend that the parliamentary authorities take steps to ensure that:**
- **MPs, peers and all staff are aware of the support available from their local police and the Parliamentary Liaison and Investigation Team to address abuse and threats via social media, as well as other appropriate support from the Members' Security Support Service and Health Assured, the Employee Assistance Programme; and**
  - **This support is kept under review to keep step with digital innovations.**
86. **Although it is outside the scope of our audit, we would support efforts to strengthen electoral law so that it is fully fit to address the challenges that parliamentary candidates may face in the digital age.**

### **Gender-sensitive behaviour**

87. We considered whether there is a link between unacceptable behaviour and the behaviour in both chambers, which could make some people feel uncomfortable. At times, a lack of respect and use of certain language could be considered sexist.
88. **We consider that the Speaker's guide to behaviour in the Chamber in the Commons, and a parallel guide to be established in the Lords, could provide a framework for defining what is and is not acceptable, with a role for the Whips, the Convenor of the Crossbench Peers, and all members in proactively challenging and calling out behaviour that does not meet the agreed standard.**
89. We discussed the formal language used in the chambers, for example, "*My Right Hon friend*", "*the Hon member for...*" and whether it was desirable to update it. **Although we support retaining the use of impersonal language in the chambers to encourage courtesy, how this is achieved should be a matter of further consideration.**
90. We also recognise that there are some aspects of both Houses' practices and traditions that are gendered, such as the fact that ceremonial uniforms are seen to be based on male dress, and should be reviewed.

### **A gender-sensitive workspace**

91. Given the nature of the historic site in which some of the buildings are located, there are challenges Parliament faces in respect to gender sensitivity and accessibility. In November 2017, the programme boards leading the Northern Estates and Restoration and Renewal programmes established an Inclusion and Accessibility Steering Group to help them to ensure that accessibility and inclusion issues are central to the design of the building renovation work that will be undertaken over the coming years. (Appendix 13 provides more information on the gender-sensitive spaces and facilities currently available on the parliamentary estate.)
92. The chambers are the most visible part of Parliament for most observers. The lack of adequate seating in the chambers means that Parliament does not come across as a gender-sensitive environment or, although we recognise that this was outside the scope of our audit, one which is always sensitive to the need of disabled parliamentarians.

93. In a similar vein, there is anecdotal evidence that the current system of “bobbing up and down to catch attention” to indicate that parliamentarians want to intervene to speak can be off-putting to some women in the Lords, as well as challenging for some disabled parliamentarians. This was raised particularly in relation to Question Time in the Lords.
94. **We recommend that adequate time should be given to front-bench members to be seated in the House of Commons chamber during the transition between items of business, so that the public perception of the business of the chamber is that it is orderly and dignified.**
95. **The number of questions, speeches and interventions in both Houses should be measured by gender using data from the Official Report, in order to analyse whether members from one gender are disproportionately represented. In the light of the findings, consideration should then be given to possible steps that might be taken to ensure that any barriers to intervening are addressed, including the method by which parliamentarians indicate they want to speak.**
96. At present, the Curator’s Office considered it impossible to carry out a reliable gender audit on the artwork collection relating to the painter as works have not been catalogued by gender and data is not collected from artists or sitters.
97. It is possible to say however, that the number of women sitters and artists is a small fraction of the number of men. This is unsurprising, given that the majority of the collection dates from the nineteenth century, when women had no formal role in politics and professional women artists faced all the barriers of women entering professions, so were few in number. The Curator’s Office did provide us with evidence of more recent acquisitions by female artists.
98. **We welcome the progress that has been made in relation to increasing the number of artworks of and by women in the Parliamentary Art Collection, for example the New Dawn commission and the modern artwork in Portcullis House. However, we noted that the Palace of Westminster is a heritage building, and in our view, it is appropriate that the artwork hanging there reflects that fact.**
99. **We noted that the Restoration and Renewal programme is an opportunity to continue progress in increasing the inclusivity of parliamentary artwork.**

### **Public engagement**

100. The bicameral Education and Engagement team, the two Houses’ Communications teams and the Parliamentary Digital Service (PDS) work together to seek to open up Parliament to the public. They reach out to communities and audiences across the UK, promoting understanding of the role and relevance of both Houses, encouraging people to get involved and empowering citizens to have a voice.

101. While these teams aim to be sensitive to gender in their work, for example using gender-neutral language and ensuring that the work of female parliamentarians is highlighted alongside that of their male colleagues, this may not always be undertaken consistently.
102. **We welcome the efforts of the Education and Engagement Team, the Communications teams, and the Parliamentary Digital Service to be gender sensitive in their work to open up Parliament to the public. We recommend that, to ensure this is undertaken consistently, they develop a formal policy on public engagement and gender, including a means of monitoring compliance with that policy.**

## CHAPTER 4: GENDER MAINSTREAMING

103. “Gender mainstreaming” is the process of assessing and taking into account the impact on women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes. In our discussions on this subject, we considered:
- The extent to which Parliament is required to take account of gender equality issues in carrying out its work;
  - The mechanisms or structures in place to mainstream gender equality in the work of the Parliament and in the budgetary oversight process; and
  - Whether male and female parliamentarians are equally represented on delegation and select committee travel.

### Parliament’s scrutiny role

#### *Legislation*

104. Government departments typically consider equality considerations, including gender impacts, as part of a wider impact assessment when developing primary and secondary legislation. Ministers are also required to certify whether the legislation proposed by the Government is compliant with the Human Rights Act 1998.
105. The Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) assesses all legislation, including for compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), and Article 14 of the ECHR which prohibits discrimination on a range of grounds, including sex.
106. These analyses are all in the public domain and available to parliamentarians in scrutinising legislation. We are not able to determine the extent to which they are used.

#### *Committee scrutiny*

107. The Women and Equalities Committee was first appointed as a select committee of the House of Commons in 2015 to scrutinise the policy, administration and expenditure of the Government Equalities Office and its associated non-departmental public body, the EHRC. This remit extends to examining the effectiveness of equality law and policy across Government, and across all protected characteristics, not just gender. The Committee’s recommendations are generally directed to the Government or other public bodies. In common with other select committees, it does not have a legislative role; nor does it routinely or systematically undertake pre-or post-legislative scrutiny, although it is able to do so.
108. By convention, select committees in the Commons and Lords are established to complement rather than duplicate each other’s activities. Hence, there is no direct equivalent committee in the Lords.
109. Since the Democratic Audit in 2013, the Commons Liaison Committee has monitored the gender diversity of witnesses giving oral evidence to select committees. Witnesses are distinguished between individuals that committees invite to come before them (discretionary witnesses) and people who appear because they hold a particular position, namely Ministers and key office holders, for example the heads of public bodies falling within the committee’s remit (non-discretionary witnesses). Appendix 14 provides a breakdown of Commons select committee witnesses by gender during the current 2017-19 session, as of June 2018.

110. There is a lot of welcome good practice in select committees to ensure committees hear the full range of views from diverse groups, led by chairs and staff. This is monitored in the Commons, but not yet monitored in the Lords. Examples of steps taken in both Houses include:
- Adding statements on witness diversity to websites and communications with witnesses;
  - Offering extra places on panels to organisations if they can provide a representative of both genders;
  - Using broader outreach events, social media and web fora to draw in a wider range of evidence and as a way of identifying potential oral evidence witnesses from broader backgrounds;
  - Identifying potential witnesses in an organisation just below the top management tier (for example Finance or Operations Directors, rather than the Chief Executive); and
  - Simpler ways for witnesses to claim expenses for caring responsibilities arising from giving evidence and to access emergency carer cover. The witness expenses budget has been increased to ensure that the costs of witness travel and witness accommodation can be covered where necessary and witnesses proactively alerted to the availability of this support.
111. **Parliament has many of the processes in place that allow it to take account of gender issues in its legislative and scrutiny functions. We particularly welcome the establishment of the Women and Equalities Committee on a permanent footing in 2017.**
112. **Building on the good practice which was highlighted in our evidence base, select committees should make every possible effort to ensure that female witnesses and those from other diverse groups are not prevented from contributing to their inquiries, either by being overlooked in favour of the “usual suspects” or by being put off from putting themselves forward. We understand that the Lords Liaison Committee is expected to consider proposals on how Lords committees might monitor this more routinely: we support this.**

*Scrutiny of budget impacts on women*

113. Parliament does not have access to information from the Government relating to the gender impact of budgets or spending plans, although individual members have commissioned work from Library research staff.
114. In each House, the Commission, the Finance Committee and the Audit Committee scrutinise the budget and expenditure of their respective Administration. In neither House do these bodies expressly scrutinise financial planning for gender equality impacts or similar.
115. However, the authors of proposals submitted to the Management Boards of each House must confirm that they have considered equality issues and, if an equality analysis was carried out, summarise the main issues highlighted and actions taken. In the House of Lords, before budgets for individual offices are approved, the budget holders are encouraged to have regard to issues relating to diversity and inclusion.

### **Gender-related networks in Parliament**

116. In addition to the (Commons-only) Women and Equalities Committee, there is a range of in-house expertise on gender issues, including research specialists, a number of All-Party Parliamentary Groups and the workplace equality network Parligender. (A full list can be found in Appendix 15.) However, these sources of expertise are disparate, and it is not always clear to people working in Parliament how to access them.
117. **To support parliamentarians to take account of gender impacts in their work, information should be made more readily available on the different groups or organisations in Parliament with specialist knowledge, brought together in one place and clearly signposted.**
118. **Existing Continuous Professional Development options for MPs and peers should be publicised or expanded as appropriate to include, for example, unconscious bias, equality legislation and witness questioning techniques. Such provision could be different in the Commons and Lords.**

### **Delegation travel**

119. Most select committees in both Houses have the power to undertake committee visits. In relation to international visits, committees bid for funding for a certain number of places, and committees decide informally amongst themselves who will attend, usually by a process of volunteering. A breakdown of official travel by gender can be found in Appendix 17; it broadly reflects the gender balance of each House.
120. Details relating to official travel undertaken in connection with international assemblies and inter-parliamentary associations can be found in Appendix 16.
121. **We were pleased to note from the data made available to us that there does not appear to be a gender barrier to participating in delegation travel. However, we do consider that more could be done to make it easier for parents to participate.**
122. **New select committee travel guidelines should be introduced by the Liaison Committees of each House, with international organisations encouraged to do the same. Guidelines might include:**
- a. **Restricting travel to weekdays where possible;**
  - b. **Restricting travel to periods in which Parliament is sitting (i.e. not recesses) where possible (although we had differing views as to whether this would be helpful);**
  - c. **Introducing a provision whereby additional childcare costs incurred in the course of select committee travel may be claimed; and**
  - d. **Proactively promoting existing provisions from international assemblies or associations to assist with childcare.**

## CHAPTER 5: NUMBERS AND POSITIONS OF STAFF, POLICIES AND PLANS

123. We considered whether there was a gender balance in the number of staff working in the Administrations of each House and whether men and women were represented equally among the senior staff. We considered whether career development opportunities were equally available for men and women. We also considered whether the Administrations had policies to ensure that their workplace is free from discrimination.
124. We recognise that Parliament is also a place of work for many other groups besides MPs, peers and staff of the House Administrations, including members' staff, journalists, staff who support international bodies such as the IPU, and contractors. These groups were excluded from the scope of our audit owing in part to the lack of availability of data, and because their employment does not fall within the remit of the parliamentary authorities.
125. Many of the recommendations we have made in previous chapters, although directed at members, would, we hope, also create a more gender-sensitive environment for staff. We note too that the new Behaviour Code for Parliament applies to all, whether they "are a visitor or working in Parliament at Westminster or elsewhere." Although many of our observations relate to statistics, we hope these statistics will be used to track progress over the coming years.
126. Staff are closely concerned with the current discussions about bullying and harassment. These discussions were continuing to develop during the period when we were considering this draft report. **We are aware that statistics about bullying and harassment of staff of the House of Commons or House of Lords are published from time to time in response to Freedom of Information requests, but, so far as we know, these statistics have not been broken down by gender. We ask the House Administrations to consider whether this might be possible in future, given that this information will presumably be available to those raising formal complaints through the new channels open to staff of both Houses.**

### Numbers and positions of staff

127. There are approximately 2,300 staff employed by the House of Commons, 550 employed by the House of Lords, and 500 who work in PDS as staff employed jointly by the Commons and Lords. These staff perform a wide range of roles to support the chambers and committees, provide research, outreach and visitor, catering and digital services, and maintain and secure the parliamentary estate.
128. Approximately 45% of all House of Commons (and PDS) staff are female. However, when the most senior levels of the Administration are examined, women are less well represented. At Board level, including the Managing Director of PDS, who is employed jointly by both Houses, only 33% are women. (Appendices 18 and 19 provide a gender breakdown of staff by pay band.)
129. Approximately 52% of all House of Lords staff are female. But again, when the most senior levels of the Administration are examined, women are less well represented. At Board level, no executive members who are solely employed by the Lords are women, although the Managing Director of PDS, who is employed jointly by both Houses and sits on both Boards, is female. The proportion of women on the Lords Management

Board rises to 25% when its external board member, who is a woman, is included. (Appendices 20 and 21 provide a breakdown of gender by grade in the House of Lords.)

### **Steps taken to encourage equality, diversion and inclusion**

130. The Commons and Lords Administrations each have their own small teams focused on inclusion and diversity, whose primary role is to provide expert advice and manage the Diversity & Inclusion Strategy in their respective Houses.
131. The House of Commons Service has taken some steps towards addressing the lack of representation at senior levels. This includes the Diversifying Senior Leadership programme, which aims to achieve a year-on-year improvement in the diversity of the senior leadership groups with a focus on BAME and women. The following measures have been introduced for recruitment into posts in senior leadership:
  - Senior leadership roles are advertised both internally and externally to draw on the most diverse possible talent pool;
  - Detailed guidance has been developed on achieving diverse shortlists for senior roles and is in use for a subset of senior leadership roles;
  - Diverse selection panels in terms of both gender and ethnicity are used;
  - Unconscious bias training has been developed and is being rolled out for selection panels and managers;
  - To support the internal pipeline, a new targeted women/BAME leadership programme is being developed; and
  - Inclusive language material has been developed to be shared with managers and staff.
132. The House of Commons has also delivered the Talent Management Programme Pilot, particularly targeted at female and BAME staff; the programme is now on its second cohort for Commons staff and its first cohort for House of Lords staff.
133. In both Houses, equality, diversity and inclusion classroom training is mandatory for all staff.
134. The House of Commons has additional diversity and inclusion training for:
  - Committee Office staff on increasing the diversity of committee witnesses; and
  - The Chamber and Committees Team on valuing difference (e-learning) and bullying and harassment in the workplace.
135. The House of Lords has additional diversity and inclusion training on Inclusive leadership. Specific mandatory training has been provided to all senior leaders (HL9 and SCS grades) to ensure that leaders are making inclusive decisions.
136. It is not yet possible to assess the impact of these policies and initiatives. However, it is striking that the Commons, which has taken specific measures to increase diversity at senior staff (SCS) levels, has a greater proportion of female SCS staff. 42% of House of Commons SCS staff are women, compared to 43% in the civil service (August 2018 figures) and 21% in the House of Lords – half the House of Commons figure. In terms of gender pay gap statistics, the House of Lords gender pay gap in favour of men is 13.7%, compared to 1.7% in the House of Commons and PDS (2017

figures).<sup>16</sup> In drawing attention to these statistics, we hope that the consultation following the publication of this report will lead to worthwhile change.

### **Access to development opportunities**

137. Opportunities for learning and development in both Houses of the Administration are “gender blind”, in that the ability to sign up to or attend training is not dependent on gender or any other protected characteristic; opportunities are open to all staff equally. However, this does not necessarily mean that staff are equally likely to take advantage of them, and the 2018 staff survey in the Commons indicated there may be a barrier for part-time staff.

### **Discrimination**

138. Both Administrations have had policies in place for some time, set out in their respective staff handbooks, in relation to discrimination, sexism and harassment. Chapter 6 of the House of Commons Staff Handbook sets out its general principles of equality, diversity and inclusion policies and procedures and how they are to be applied. It sets out the rights and responsibilities for staff and managers of upholding the values of the House to create a positive working environment for everyone as well as the various routes for support and reporting procedures.<sup>17</sup> Chapter 4 of the House of Lords Staff Handbook sets out the principles of equality and diversity policy and training, the rights and responsibilities of managers and staff, and how to make a complaint if staff feel they have been treated unfairly.<sup>18</sup>
139. One of the guiding principles of both Houses’ pay and allowance system is that there is no discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, marital status, pregnancy or maternity status, religion or belief, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or other factors, such as working pattern. Details about the gender pay gap were published in April 2018 based on 2017 figures, as set out in paragraph 136.
140. **We welcome the initiatives undertaken by both Houses to improve the diversity of staff but note that the current pace of change to increase the number of women in senior positions in the House of Lords Administration in particular is unacceptable, including on the Management Board.**
141. **In order to ensure that childcare commitments are not a barrier to career progression, the two Administrations should consider what more support should be provided, specifically for women returning to work from maternity leave, drawing on best practice from elsewhere.**

<sup>16</sup> House of Commons, *Gender Pay Gap Report 2017*; House of Lords, *Gender Pay Gap Report 2017*

<sup>17</sup> House of Commons, *Staff Handbook Chapter 6 Equality & Diversity*

<sup>18</sup> House of Lords, *Staff Handbook Chapter 4 Equality & Diversity*

142. **While we welcome the fact that opportunities for development are formally “gender-blind”, they should be advertised and awarded in a transparent manner so as to be genuinely open to all staff, regardless of their circumstances.**

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. **Our report reflects the data we reviewed, as well as our own experiences and those of the colleagues with whom we have discussed these issues. We are aware that experiences vary and are careful in our report not to make sweeping generalisations. We strongly recommend that, in developing an action plan in response to the report, the Commissions consult widely across Parliament on how our recommendations might best be implemented.**

### CHAPTER 2: NUMBERS AND POSITIONS OF MPS AND PEERS

2. **We welcome the steady progress that has been made to increase the proportion of female MPs and peers but note that a number of barriers remain to equal female representation in Parliament.**
3. **The following factors appeared to us to be particularly noteworthy in putting women off standing as an MP or putting themselves forward to the House of Lords Appointments Commission:**
  - a. **The culture of Parliament as highlighted in recent reports of bullying and harassment, and sexual harassment;**
  - b. **The challenges that working in Parliament poses for family life, including the unpredictability of business and potential long hours (with measures to date tending to benefit those who live in and around London);**
  - c. **The financial impact of standing for Parliament (particularly for disabled candidates); and**
  - d. **Online threats and threats to physical security, in particular gender-based intimidation, harassment and violence against female parliamentarians and female candidates.**
4. **We also recognise that some of these factors are an issue for women and men, and that they can also affect individuals from diverse backgrounds to different degrees. We think that this only lends weight to the argument that they should be tackled.**
5. **We recommend in Chapter 3 a series of actions that should be taken by Parliament in response to factors a, b and d above to: address fundamentally the concerns about bullying and harassment highlighted in recent reports; make parliamentary life better for families; and support parliamentarians who experience threats.**
6. **Campaign financing (factor c) is not a matter for the parliamentary authorities. However, we are aware of efforts by the Government to reduce financial barriers for disabled candidates via the Access to Elected Office Fund, and we consider there should be a further extension of this scheme beyond summer 2019.**
7. **Although attracting candidates is predominantly a matter for political parties or the House of Lords Appointments Commission, we believe there is a role for the Education and Engagement Team, the two**

**Communications teams, and the Parliamentary Digital Service in demonstrating visibly that people from all backgrounds are welcome, including:**

- a. Greater engagement with organisations supporting the increased diversity and inclusivity of Parliament;**
  - b. Continuing existing efforts to make the parliamentary website more accessible and inclusive; and**
  - c. Ensuring outreach and social media activity captures the work of parliamentarians in all their diversity (this is explored further in Chapter 3).**
- 8. When we compare the proportion of women in leadership positions in the Commons and Lords against the proportion of female MPs and peers, there does not seem to be a particular obstacle to either women or men taking up these positions.**
  - 9. One exception is the Panel of Chairs in the Commons. Although we believe that to achieve gender parity the focus should be on removing barriers for women to take up positions of leadership in Parliament, rather than on quotas or targets, we note that it would be straightforward for the Panel of Chairs to be made more diverse over time, as decisions about membership lie within the gift of the Speaker.**
  - 10. In the Commons, there does not appear to be a barrier to women joining select committees (apart from that of time). Political parties, which organise the informal mechanisms by which committee membership is decided in practice, should routinely assure themselves that women continue to have the same opportunities to serve on committees as men, according to their interest and expertise.**
  - 11. The system in the Lords, however, was considered to be more reliant on patronage, which tends to discriminate against minority groups. The Lords might therefore consider reforming their system as follows:**
    - a. Establishing a single, transparent process for nominating committee membership; and**
    - b. More frequent turnover of committee membership.**
  - 12. We also recommend the introduction of a general principle that select committees should not meet before 9.30am, so that parliamentarians have an equal opportunity to take part in them, irrespective of childcare responsibilities.**
  - 13. We consider that it would be appropriate for a parliamentary body to monitor the gender breakdown of MPs and peers and those in leadership positions, and to publish the results. We recommend that the Women and Equalities Committee and the Joint Committee on Human Rights should consider exercising their existing power to meet jointly to carry out this task on an annual basis.**

14. **To assist with this monitoring, we add our voice to calls to implement section 106 of the Equality Act 2010, which requires parties to publish data on the diversity of candidates standing for election. This could also be voluntarily extended to include appointments to the Lords, for example by political parties publishing the gender balance of appointment candidates.**
15. **We highlight the importance of intersectionality when discussing gender sensitivity. People’s identities are not one-dimensional. A person’s age, race, sexuality, disability and socio-economic status may also present additional barriers to them entering Parliament, and this should be recognised proactively. One way to help achieve diversity might, for example, be empowering women who already have established careers as well as those who might wish to build their careers within Parliament.**
16. **The House Administrations may wish to consider what data might be collected to allow future audits to take account of the experiences of individuals of other gender identities and greater consideration of intersectionality in discussing people’s experiences in Parliament.**
17. **We recommend that Erskine May should include a new chapter in future editions on gender sensitivity.**

#### CHAPTER 3: CULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND POLICIES

18. **The challenge of balancing working in Parliament with family life is a fundamental issue. It affects MPs and peers who are mothers and fathers, as well as older parliamentarians and many Administration, MPs’ and peers’ staff whose working hours are connected to sittings of the two chambers. Crucially, it also has a profound impact on their families.**
19. **Increasing the predictability of parliamentary business would improve the inclusivity of Parliament and benefit the families of those who work here. It would also give parliamentarians greater scope to focus on their wider parliamentary and constituency duties.**
20. **Recent changes to sitting hours have benefitted MPs who are based in London but not helped those who live further away. We noted, however, that it would be impossible to come up with a set of hours that would work for everyone. Reforms should therefore focus on greater predictability and more efficient use of time.**
21. **As a first step, a review should be undertaken in each House to consider how efficient it is at carrying out its business and assess options for reform such as:**
  - a. **More advance notice of the parliamentary calendar, including setting expected sitting days up to a year in advance;**
  - b. **More predictability in, and advance notice of, the scheduling of business, including a set time for voting (although the benefits of the current system were noted regarding the potential for MPs to cast their vote in response to arguments made during the debate) and a time set aside for “important questions”;**
  - c. **Compressing the sitting week into fewer days;**

- d. **More closely aligning recess dates and school holidays, to increase the ability of members from all parts of the United Kingdom to spend time with their families; and**
  - e. **Setting expectations in relation to committee workload, including in relation to consideration of committee reports and the timing of Committee visits.**
- 22. At the time of agreeing our report, the House of Commons had not yet considered a substantive motion to implement its decision in principle to allow new parents to vote in a division by proxy. Such a motion should be brought forward immediately. MPs taking leave from the House in this way should not be subject to any reduction in their staffing budgets, as the work of their offices is likely, if anything, to increase during this time.**
- 23. We also consider that the parties should look to reinforce informal pairing arrangements for other caring needs; and recommend that consideration be given by the House of Commons to how, where pairing is used, the members in question might have their vote “by pair” formally recorded.**
- 24. Developing a parliamentary policy for children and families, informed by good practice in other parliaments, would be an initial first step to a more family-friendly institution and would also address safeguarding concerns. Such a policy should include the following:**
- a. **Clearer guidance on what is allowed, including a provision that infant feeding should be allowed everywhere;**
  - b. **A clear statement of safeguarding issues and expectations around supervision, including consideration of whether children and family members could be passholders; and**
  - c. **An enhanced commitment and joined up approach to the provision of childcare.**
- 25. Facilities should be provided which support the policy. We would expect these to include:**
- a. **Better facilities for expressing milk (including for visitors);**
  - b. **Retaining the Family Rooms as dedicated spaces for families but with improvements and more consistent enforcement of their use for these purposes;**
  - c. **Provision for children and family members of different ages (including older children);**
  - d. **An information tool for parents working in Parliament; and**
  - e. **More facilities that support the needs of parliamentarians that stem from unsociable hours.**
- 26. Away from the parliamentary estate, we encourage IPSA to give consideration to how the childcare needs of MPs whose family life is unavoidably split between Westminster and their constituency might better be supported. This would be a natural extension of IPSA’s recent decision to take account of the different accommodation needs of MPs, which we welcome. IPSA should also give consideration to the means in which these claims are reported, so that no-one in need is deterred from accessing support.**

27. We note the extreme seriousness of bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct for our Parliament and others around the world. We welcome the focus that is being put on these issues via the report of Dame Laura Cox into the bullying and harassing of House of Commons staff and the establishment of two further inquiries into the experiences of others working in Parliament. Parliament must take the findings and recommendations of these inquiries extremely seriously and take concrete action in response, rather than hiding from the problem.
28. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has expressed public concern that due regard may not have been given by the House of Commons authorities to the duties of public authorities under the Equality Act to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This was exemplified by the report of Dame Laura Cox into the bullying and harassment of House staff, which although only advisory went to the heart of the management of the elected House. We believe that both Houses have a duty to apply to themselves the important and fundamental parts of the Equality Act, including section 19, that they spent so much time discussing.

29. In doing so, Parliament should consider how MPs and peers might be supported to ensure they exercise comparable duties towards their own staff; and ensure political parties aren't forgotten.
30. We welcome the IPU's new report on *Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in parliaments of Europe*, which provides data and examples of parliamentary good practices.
31. In responding to the Cox report, and those of the forthcoming inquiries, the parliamentary authorities should:
- a. Examine what other Parliaments have done, including the examples set out in the IPU's report on *Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in parliaments*, and adopt good practice; and
  - b. Examine the recommendations arising from the Women and Equalities Committee inquiry into sexual harassment and respond.
32. From our own discussions, measures might include (but not be limited to):
- a. Better support for whistle-blowers;
  - b. Acknowledging that not all staff will want to report complaints formally, a means by which staff can raise issues, such as via surveys or feedback;

- c. **Proactive communication on where members' and Administration staff can seek HR and external forms of support, and making the HR Advisory Service available for MPs in the Customer Hub;**
  - d. **Training for staff on having difficult conversations and for line managers on how to support them; and**
  - e. **Support for Administration staff who are required to enforce the rules of the two Houses, such as around pass-wearing.**
  - f. **Stronger communication about the training that is available for members and all staff. Moreover, noting that all those who hold a parliamentary pass are required to undertake compulsory training on fire safety, passholders should be required to confirm that they have completed a training course on bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment, either via an external provider such as ACAS or an internal course.**
33. **We welcome the new Behaviour Code for Parliament that has been designed to apply to all those working in or visiting Parliament. We recognise, however, the need to ensure the operation of a seamless duty of care for political party staff, regardless of the location in which they are working. We recommend that political parties adopt their own codes with parallel language to ensure consistent treatment of those working in the political arena.**
34. **We recommend that the parliamentary authorities take steps to ensure that:**
  - **MPs, peers and all staff are aware of the support available from their local police and the Parliamentary Liaison and Investigation Team to address abuse and threats via social media, as well as other appropriate support from the Members' Security Support Service and Health Assured, the Employee Assistance Programme.**
  - **This support is kept under review to keep step with digital innovations.**
35. **Although it is outside the scope of our audit, we would support efforts to strengthen electoral law so that it is fully fit to address the challenges that parliamentary candidates may face in the digital age.**
36. **We consider that the Speaker's guide to behaviour in the Chamber in the Commons, and a parallel guide to be established in the Lords, could provide a framework for defining what is and is not acceptable, with a role for the Whips, the Convenor of the Crossbench Peers, and all members in proactively challenging and calling out behaviour that does not meet the agreed standard.**
37. **Although we support retaining the use of impersonal language in the chambers to encourage courtesy, how this is achieved should be a matter of further consideration.**

38. We recommend that adequate time should be given to front-bench members to be seated in the House of Commons chamber during the transition between items of business, so that the public perception of the business of the chamber is that it is orderly and dignified.
39. The number of questions, speeches and interventions in both Houses should be measured by gender using data from the Official Report, in order to analyse whether members from one gender are disproportionately represented. In the light of the findings, consideration should then be given to possible steps that might be taken to ensure that any barriers to intervening are addressed, including the method by which parliamentarians indicate they want to speak.
40. We welcome the progress that has been made in relation to increasing the number of artworks of and by women in the Parliamentary Art Collection, for example the New Dawn commission and the modern artwork in Portcullis House. However, we noted that the Palace of Westminster is a heritage building and, in our view, it is appropriate that the artwork hanging there reflects that fact.
41. We noted that the Restoration & Renewal programme is an opportunity to continue progress in increasing the inclusivity of parliamentary artwork.
42. We welcome the efforts of the Education and Engagement Team, the Communications teams, and the Parliamentary Digital Service to be gender sensitive in their work to open up Parliament to the public. We recommend that, to ensure this is undertaken consistently, the Team develops a formal policy on public engagement and gender, including a means of monitoring compliance with the policy.

#### CHAPTER 4: GENDER MAINSTREAMING

43. Parliament has many of the processes in place that allow it to take account of gender issues in its legislative and scrutiny functions. We particularly welcome the establishment of the Women and Equalities Committee on a permanent footing in 2017.
44. Building on the good practice which was highlighted in our evidence base, select committees should make every possible effort to ensure that female witnesses and those from other diverse groups are not prevented from contributing to their inquiries, either by being overlooked in favour of the “usual suspects” or by being put off from putting themselves forward. We understand that the Lords Liaison Committee is expected to consider proposals on how Lords committees might monitor this more routinely: we support this.
45. To support parliamentarians to take account of gender impacts in their work, information should be made more readily available on the different groups or organisations in Parliament with specialist knowledge, brought together in one place and clearly signposted.

46. Existing Continuous Professional Development options for MPs and peers should be publicised or expanded as appropriate to include, for example, unconscious bias, equality legislation and witness questioning techniques. Such provision could be different in the Commons and Lords.
47. We were pleased to note from the data made available to us that there does not appear to be a gender barrier to delegation travel. However, we do consider that more could be done to make it easier for parents to participate.
48. New select committee travel guidelines should be introduced by the Liaison Committees of each House, with international organisations encouraged to do the same. Guidelines might include:
  - a. Restricting travel to weekdays where possible;
  - b. Restricting travel to parliamentary sitting time where possible (although we had differing views as to whether this would be helpful);
  - c. Introducing a provision whereby additional childcare costs incurred in the course of select committee travel may be claimed; and
  - d. Proactively promoting existing provisions from international assemblies or associations to assist with childcare.

#### CHAPTER 5: NUMBERS AND POSITIONS OF STAFF, POLICIES AND PLANS

49. We are aware that statistics about bullying and harassment of staff of the House of Commons or House of Lords are published from time to time in response to Freedom of Information requests, but, so far as we know, these statistics have not been broken down by gender. We ask the House Administrations to consider whether this might be possible in future, given that this information will presumably be available to those raising formal complaints through the new channels open to staff of both Houses.
50. We welcome the initiatives undertaken by both Houses to improve the diversity of staff but note that the current pace of change to increase the number of women in senior positions in the House of Lords Administration in particular is unacceptable, including on the Management Board.
51. In order to ensure that childcare commitments are not a barrier to career progression, the two Administrations should consider what more support should be provided, specifically for women returning to work from maternity leave, drawing on best practice from elsewhere.
52. While we welcome the fact that opportunities for development are formally “gender-blind”, they should be advertised and awarded in a transparent manner so as to be genuinely open to all staff, regardless of their circumstances.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 – Women MPs by party as of October 2018

<b>Party</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Labour	119	46%
Conservative	67	21%
Scottish National	12	34%
Liberal Democrat	4	33%
Sinn Fein	3	43%
DUP	1	10%
Green	1	100%
Independent	1	13%
Plaid Cymru	1	25%
All	209	32%

Source: *UK Parliament – Members' Names Data Platform*

### Appendix 2 – Women peers by party as of October 2018

<b>Party/Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Bishops	3	12%
Conservative	62	25%
Crossbench	44	24%
Labour	58	31%
Liberal Democrat	34	35%
Non-affiliated	4	14%
Other	2	13%
Total	207	26%

Source: *UK Parliament – Members' Names Data Platform*

### Appendix 3 – Women MPs by election year (1987 -2017)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
2017	208	32%
2015	191	29%
2010	143	22%
2005	128	20%
2001	118	17.9%
1997	120	18.2%
1992	60	9.2%
1987	41	6.3%

Source: House of Commons Research Papers 01/75, 05/33 & 10/36, Fawcett Society

**Appendix 4** – Women peers by session (1996–2017).

<b>Session</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
2016–17	218	26.1%
2015–16	216	25.6%
2014–15	200	23.7%
2013–14	192	23.0%
2012–13	180	22.2%
2010–12	180	22.0%
2009–10	147	20.0%
2008–09	148	20.1%
2007–08	148	19.9%
2006–07	147	19.6%
2005–06	142	18.9%
2004–05	125	17.7%
2003–04	126	17.8%
2002–03	113	16.6%
2001–02	113	16.3%
2000–01	110	16.2%
1999–00	110	15.9%
1998–99	118	8.9%
1997–98	103	7.9%
1996–97	86	7.1%

Source: HL Library, House of Lords Sessional Business Statistics

**Appendix 5** – Women candidates by party (General Election 2017)

<b>Party</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Labour	256	41%
Conservative	184	29%
Liberal Democrat	184	29%
Green	164	35%
Scottish National	20	34%
Plaid Cymru	11	28%
Sinn Fein	7	39%
DUP	2	12%
Total	973	29%

Source: HC Library Briefing Paper *General Election 2017: results and analysis*

### Appendix 6 – House of Commons leadership positions

<b>Position</b>	<b>Gender profile</b>
House of Commons Commission	Among the seven parliamentary members, there are three women (43%) and four men (66%). There are also two external members, both of whom are currently women, and two official members, both of whom are currently men, bringing the total percentage of women to 45%.
Speaker & Deputies	Across the four posts of Speaker and Deputies the gender split is 50:50: two women Deputy Speakers and one man; the Speaker is a man.
Panel of Chairs	Nine (22%) of the 41 members of the Panel are women.
Committee chairs	Of 36 select committees, 11 (31%) are chaired by a woman.

Source: *UK Parliament – Members' Names Data Platform*

### Appendix 7 – House of Lords leadership positions

<b>Position</b>	<b>Gender profile</b>
House of Lords Commission	Four women (40%) and six men (60%). There are also two external members, one of whom is currently a woman, bringing the total percentage of women to 42%.
Lord Speaker & Deputies	Across the panel of Deputies, including the Lord Speaker, the gender split is 40% female and 60% male. Of the three most senior, salaried posts (Lord Speaker, Senior Deputy Speaker, and Chairman of the EU Committee), all three are currently held by men.
Committee chairs	Of 32 select committees, six (19%) are chaired by a woman.

Source: *UK Parliament – Members' Names Data Platform*

**Appendix 8** – Breakdown of House of Commons committee by gender as of October 2018

<b>Committee</b>	<b>% of male members</b>	<b>% of female members</b>	<b>Gender of chair</b>
Administration	55%	45%	Male
Backbench Business	75%	25%	Male
Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	73%	27%	Female
Defence	81%	18%	Male
Digital, Culture, Media and Sport	73%	27%	Male
Education	36%	64%	Male
Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	64%	36%	Male
Environmental Audit	62%	38%	Female
European Scrutiny	81%	19%	Male
European Statutory Instruments	44%	56%	Male
Exiting the European Union	76%	24%	Male
Finance	91%	9%	Male
Foreign Affairs	82%	18%	Male
Health and Social Care	64%	36%	Female
Home Affairs	73%	27%	Female
Housing, Communities and Local Government	64%	36%	Male
International Development	91%	9%	Male
International Trade	73%	27%	Male
Joint Committee on Human Rights (Commons members)	33%	67%	Female
Justice	55%	45%	Male
Northern Ireland Affairs	77%	23%	Male
Petitions	64%	36%	Female
Procedure	82%	18%	Male
Public Accounts	56%	44%	Female
Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs	73%	27%	Male
Regulatory Reform	79%	21%	Male
Science and Technology	73%	27%	Male
Scottish Affairs	73%	27%	Male
Selection	89%	11%	Male
Standards (and Privileges)	66%	33%	Female
Statutory Instruments	71%	29%	Male
Transport	91%	9%	Female
Treasury	64%	36%	Female
Welsh Affairs	64%	36%	Male
Women and Equalities	27%	73%	Female
Work and Pensions	73%	27%	Male
Percentage of female committee chairs:			31%

Source: *UK Parliament – Members' Names Data Platform*

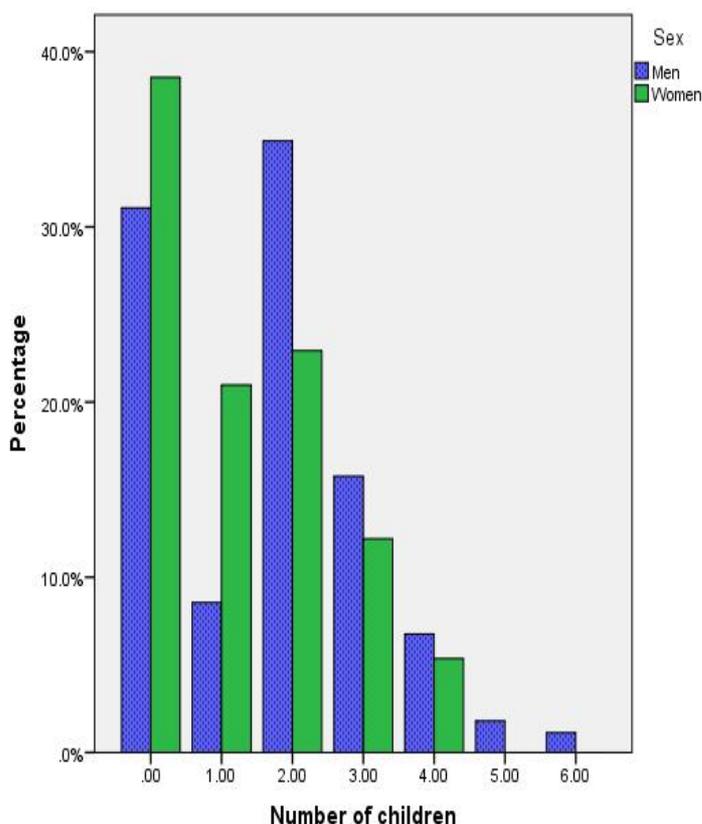
**Appendix 9** – Breakdown of House of Lords committees by gender as of 15 June 2018

<b>Committee</b>	<b>% of male members</b>	<b>% of female members</b>	<b>Gender of chair</b>
<b><i>Domestic committees</i></b>			
Audit	50%	50%	Female (external member)
Finance	80%	20%	Female
House of Lords Commission	60%	40%	Male (Lord Speaker– ex officio)
Liaison	73%	27%	Male (Senior Deputy Speaker – ex officio)
Lords' Conduct (Privileges and Conduct sub-committee)	80%	20%	Male
Privileges and Conduct	81%	19%	Male (Senior Deputy Speaker – ex officio)
Procedure	78%	22%	Male (Senior Deputy Speaker – ex officio)
Selection	82%	18%	Male (Senior Deputy Speaker – ex officio)
Services	80%	20%	Male
Works of Art Advisory Panel	67%	23%	Female
<b><i>Legislative committees</i></b>			
Constitution	75%	25%	Female
Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform	90%	10%	Male
Human Rights (Lords members)	33%	77%	N/A
Hybrid Instruments	100%	0%	Male (Senior Deputy Speaker – ex officio)
Secondary Legislation Scrutiny	82%	18%	Male
Standing Orders (Private Bills)	88%	12%	Male (Senior Deputy Speaker – ex officio)
Statutory Instruments (Lords members)	57%	43%	N/A
<b><i>Investigative committees</i></b>			
Bribery Act 2010	83%	17%	Male
Communications	46%	54%	Male
Economic Affairs	77%	23%	Male
European Union	50%	50%	Male
Energy and Environment (EU sub-committee)	83%	17%	Male
External Affairs (EU sub-committee)	50%	50%	Female
Financial Affairs (EU sub-committee)	75%	25%	Female
Home Affairs (EU sub-committee)	67%	33%	Male
Internal Market (EU sub-committee)	69%	31%	Male
Justice (EU sub-committee)	67%	33%	Female
Intergenerational Fairness	42%	58%	Male
International Relations	58%	42%	Male

National Security Strategy (Lords members)	70%	30%	N/A
Regenerating Seaside Towns	77%	23%	Male
Rural Economy Committee	50%	50%	Male
Science and Technology	79%	21%	Male
Percentage of female committee chairs (does not include external members)			19%

Source: *UK Parliament – Members’ Names Data Platform*

### Appendix 10 – Findings of the 2017 parenting survey: MPs’ number of children by sex



Disaggregated findings from survey:

- 435 MPs (67%) have children.
- 30% men MPs and 39% of women have no children.
- On average men MPs have 2.4 children and women MPs have 2.0 children (excluding MPs without children from the calculation).
- 26 MPs were identified whose first child was born after they entered Parliament.
- The average age of the MP’s eldest child when they first entered Parliament was: 15 years old for women and 11 years old for men (among the group of MPs for whom we have data about their eldest child’s date of birth).
- The average age of first child bearing was 32 for both men and women MPs (where we have data on age of child).

Source: 2017 MP parenting survey conducted by Professor Rosie Campbell and Professor Sarah Childs

### **Appendix 11** – Sitting hours and patterns of the House of Commons

The House of Commons sitting hours are Mondays 2.30-10.30pm, Tuesdays and Wednesdays 11.30am-7.30pm, Thursdays 9.30am-5.30pm and sitting Fridays 9.30am-3pm. The House usually breaks for recesses as follows:

- Over Christmas and New Year (usually two weeks);
- Sometimes in mid-February (up to one week);
- At Easter (one or two weeks);
- Over the Spring Bank Holiday (one week); and
- In the summer (usually between late July and early September, and again from the end of the second week in September to the end of the first week in October).
- For three days in November

### **Appendix 12** – Sitting hours and patterns of the House of Lords

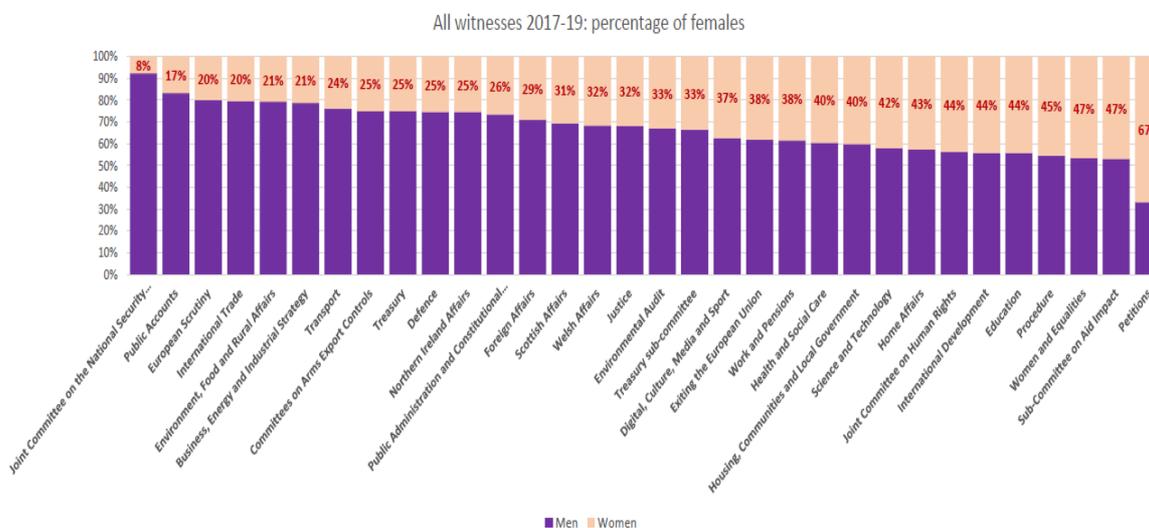
The House of Lords usually sits for public business on Mondays and Tuesdays at 2.30 pm, on Wednesdays at 3 pm and on Thursdays at 11 am. The House also sits on some Fridays at 10 am. It is a firm convention that the House normally rises by about 10 pm on Mondays to Wednesdays by about 7 pm on Thursdays, and by about 3 pm on Fridays. The House usually breaks for recesses as follows:

- Over Christmas and New Year (usually two weeks);
- Sometimes in mid-February (up to one week);
- At Easter (one or two weeks);
- Over the Spring Bank Holiday (one week); and
- In the summer (usually between late July and early September, and again from the end of the second week in September to the end of the first week in October).

### **Appendix 13** – Gender-sensitive spaces and facilities currently available on the parliamentary estate

- An on-site nursery for passholders. Its provision is for the permanent placement of 40 children up to the age of five. It is available to MPs and peers, members' staff, House of Commons, House of Lords and PDS employees, Press Gallery media pass holders, Whitehall parliamentary pass holders and contractors situated on the parliamentary estate.
- An emergency childcare pilot began in October 2017 and is running until December 2019. This service is provided by My Family Care for MPs, staff and witnesses of select Committees with childcare commitments that can't be met by a permanent nursery place.
- In the Commons, a Family Room is available located off the Lower Waiting Hall and is available for use by MPs' spouses' or partners' and other family members on sitting days from 10am until the rise of the House and on non-sitting days from 10am to 6pm. A television set and a small selection of toys are available.
- In the Lords, a Family Room is available located off Peers' Cloakroom and is available for use by the families of members.
- Baby change rooms are available for all pass-holders in the palace and Portcullis House to breast feed and change their babies.
- There are three rooms set aside for female Members in the Palace and reallocation of one Portcullis House bathroom for the use of female MPs has been approved to reflect the existence of a male-MPs-only changing room in the Palace.

## Appendix 14 – Breakdown of Commons select committee witnesses by gender during the current 2017-19 session, as of June 2018



Source: HC Liaison Committee, Second Report of Session 2017-19, *Witness gender diversity 2017-2019*, HC 1033, 23 May 2018

## Appendix 15 – Groups in Parliament with gender equality expertise

- Women and Equality Committee (Commons-only)
- The Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion
- The Women’s Parliamentary Labour Party
- The Conservative Women’s Forum
- All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs):<sup>19</sup>
  - APPG Women in Parliament
  - APPG on Sex Equality
  - APPG Women and Enterprise
  - APPG Women and Work
  - APPG on Women, Peace and Security (APPG-WPS)
  - APPG for Women in the Penal System
  - APPG on Women’s Health:
  - APPG Women in Transport
- Specialists in the Research and Library Services of each House Administration
- The Diversity and Inclusion teams of each House Administration
- The workplace equality network Parligender

<sup>19</sup> List of APPG’s on the Parliamentary website as of 18 July 2018

## Appendix 16 – International assemblies and inter-parliamentary associations

- The British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA) has no formal rules about gender balance on delegation travel, although they do have standard quorum rules for official travel overseas delegations organised by BIPA for MPs and peers.
- The British-American Parliamentary Group’s rules for delegations provide that “the duties of the Executive Committee shall ensure that the selection of participants in delegations is balanced and reasonable”.
- The British Group of the IPU has a nominal target level for female participation of 29% of all delegations. In addition, under IPU Statutes for participation in its international Assemblies, there is a requirement that both genders be represented on all national parliamentary delegations or that members will have its voting and participation rights restricted. On this basis, UK delegations to IPU Assemblies must always include at least one female participant to sit on the IPU Governing Council and attend the meeting of the IPU’s Forum of Women Parliamentarians. Of the 309 visits undertaken by BGIPU members to date since 2014, 89 delegates were female, comprising 28.8% of all delegation travel.
- While it cannot be a requirement, the CPA UK ask that inward delegations be gender balanced, and if they are paying some or all of the costs of the delegation they specify that women must be included. In 2017/18, outward delegations of members and parliamentary staff were 55/45 male/female.

Source: Information provided by the officers of these assemblies and associations

## Appendix 17 – Delegation travel by gender

Session	Total visit attendees	Male	Female
Select Committee travel			
House of Commons			
2016-17	737	71%	29%
2015-16	621	71%	29%
2014-15	455	82%	18%
2013-14	621	78%	22%
House of Lords			
2016-17	120	66%	34%
2015-16	153	63%	37%
2014-15	100	72%	28%
2013-14	104	70%	30%
Travel in connection with international assemblies or associations			
UK delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe			
November 2017	N/A	61%	39%
2015-2017	N/A	78%	22%
UK delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly			
November 2017	N/A	78%	22%
2014-2017	N/A	78%	22%

Source: House of Commons and Lords Committee Offices; Overseas Office

**Appendix 18** – Gender profile of House of Commons Administration staff by pay band

Grade	Female	Male
SCS	42%	58%
A	52%	48%
B	46%	54%
C	58%	42%
Catering	44%	56%
D	35%	65%
E	56%	44%
Other	13%	87%
Administration Total	44%	56%

Source: House of Commons Human Resources

Figures as at 30 April 2018

**Appendix 19** – Gender profile of senior staff of the House of Commons Administration

	Female	Male
Commons Executive Board	33%	67%
Strategy Development Group	44%	56%
Commons Leadership Forum	47%	53%

Source: House of Commons Human Resources

Figures as at 30 April 2018

**Appendix 20** – Gender profile of House of Lords Administration staff by pay band

Grade	Female	Male
SCS	21%	79%
HL9	17%	83%
HL8	44%	56%
HL7	52%	48%
HL6	62%	38%
HL5	57%	43%
HL4	46%	54%
HL3	51%	49%
HL2	57%	43%
HL1	51%	49%
Administration Total	52%	48%

Source: House of Lords Human Resources

Figures as at 30 April 2018

**Appendix 21** – Gender profile of senior staff groups in the House of Lords Administration

	Female	Male
Lords Management Board	25%	75%
Senior Leadership Forum (grades HL9 and above)	26%	74%

Source: House of Lords Human Resources  
 Figures as at 19 November 2018

**Appendix 22** – Agreed actions following the establishment of a Working Group on an Independent Complaints and Grievance Policy (ICGP)

- A Behaviour Code for Parliament that covers bullying and harassment, and sexual harassment, and applies to all persons working for or with Parliament, or who are lawfully on the parliamentary estate;
- An independent complaints and grievance scheme to underpin the Code, together with associated policies, appropriate sanctions and the contractual arrangements necessary for delivering the scheme;
- Particular procedures to deal with reports of sexual harassment, including the provision of a specialist Independent Sexual Violence Advocate;
- A system of training to support the Code; and
- A human resources support service for staff employed by members or jointly by political parties, delivered by a third-party provider, and a handbook for these staff.

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This list reflects some of the research and other information that relates to our audit discussions and data. It is intended as a guide to further reading and is not exhaustive.

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## **RECORD OF ATTENDANCE**

### **Monday 29 October: Session 1: Numbers and positions of MPs and peers**

Lord Carlile of Berriew  
David Clark  
Vicky Ford MP  
Lynn Gardner  
Baroness Greender  
Baroness Grey-Thompson  
Benet Hiscock  
Ranil Jayawardena MP  
Gavin Shuker MP  
Alison Thewliss MP  
Baroness Thornton  
Philippa Tudor

### **Tuesday 30 October: Session 2: Culture, Environment and Policies**

Lord Carlile of Berriew  
David Clark  
Vicky Ford MP  
Lynn Gardner  
Baroness Greender  
Baroness Grey-Thompson  
Benet Hiscock  
Ranil Jayawardena MP  
Gavin Shuker MP  
Alison Thewliss MP  
Baroness Thornton  
Philippa Tudor

### **Thursday 1 November: Session 3: Gender Mainstreaming and Session 4: Numbers and positions of staff, policies and plans**

Lord Carlile of Berriew  
David Clark  
Vicky Ford MP  
Lynn Gardner  
Baroness Greender  
Baroness Grey-Thompson  
Benet Hiscock  
Ranil Jayawardena MP  
Alison Thewliss MP  
Baroness Thornton  
Philippa Tudor

### **Monday 26 November: Report consideration**

Lord Carlile of Berriew  
David Clark  
Vicky Ford MP  
Lynn Gardner  
Baroness Greender  
Baroness Grey-Thompson  
Benet Hiscock  
Baroness Thornton  
Philippa Tudor