



HOUSE OF LORDS

Guide to Work in Committees



The House of Lords is an essential part of the UK Parliament. Its committees investigate public policy, proposed laws and government activity. Committees are smaller groups of members that meet away from the chamber. Everyone can watch committees at work. Entry to watch meetings is free and meetings are broadcast online.

Contents

What's on	2
Investigative committees	3
Members	4
Committee room diagram	5
Meetings	6
Inquiries	8
Language key	Inside back cover

Welcome

Committees investigate broad, long-term issues and write reports on their findings.

The reports:

- are debated in the House of Lords
- provoke discussion outside Parliament
- make recommendations to government.

The government responds to reports.



What's on

Entry to watch committee meetings is free. You can turn up on the day or watch online at www.parliamentlive.tv

Watching meetings

Go to
www.parliament.uk/lords –
'What's on'.

For the day's business

The screenshot shows the 'What's on in Parliament' website. At the top, there is a calendar for March 2019. Below the calendar, the date 'Tuesday 26 March 2019' is displayed. The main content area lists several committee meetings:

- 9.30 am:** Rural Economy Committee - Private Meeting (Location: Room 3, Palace of Westminster)
- 10.30 am:** All-Party Working Group - Oral Evidence Session (Topic: Digital Skills)
- 11.30 am:** Intergovernmental Partners and Pension Committee - Private Meeting

Inquiries and reports

Visit each committee's pages at www.parliament.uk/lords

The screenshot shows the website for the 'Lords Select Committee Science and Technology Committee (Lords)'. The page features a header with the committee's name and a navigation menu. Below the header, there are several sections:

- What's on:** A section with 'Current work' and 'Other work'.
- Current work:** A list of ongoing projects, including 'Life Sciences and the Business Strategy'.
- Latest publications:** A list of recent reports, including 'Nuclear Research and Technology: Reaching the Trough of Disillusionment'.
- Next meeting(s):** A list of upcoming meetings, including '28 January 2019 (10:00 am) - Oral Evidence Session: Life Sciences and the Business Strategy'.

Investigative committees

Communications Committee

Investigates public policy areas related to the media, communications and creative industries.

Constitution Committee

Investigates issues relating to the constitution, such as coalition government and Scottish independence, and the impact of bills – if it thinks a bill raises constitutional issues it seeks information and clarification from the government.

Economic Affairs Committee

Investigates current economic issues and reviews the performance and behaviour of the economy, regularly meeting Bank of England and Treasury officials. It may set up a sub-committee each year to look at some parts of the Finance Bill.

European Union Committee

Examines draft EU laws before they are agreed in the EU, looks at other EU-related matters before decisions are taken on them and keeps a check on government action at EU level. It has six sub-committees focusing on particular subjects.

Science and Technology Committee

Investigates public policy areas which are, or ought to be, informed by scientific research, technological challenges and opportunities and public policy towards science itself.

International Relations Committee

The House's newest permanent committee considers the UK's international relations.

To see briefings on each committee and find out more about their work go to
www.lordspublications.parliament.uk

One-off committees are set up to look at issues outside these subject areas, like the rural economy and regenerating seaside towns.

See all Lords committees at www.parliament.uk/hlcommittees

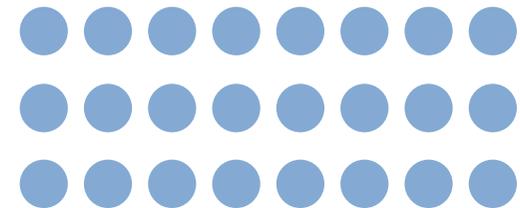
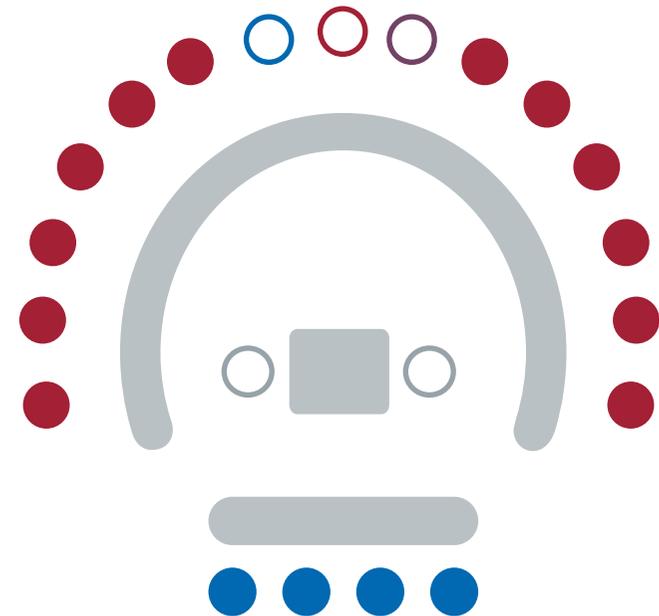
Members

Members of the House of Lords come from different walks of life, from across the UK, and represent a wide range of professions and backgrounds. Many remain active in their careers. This professional experience is an especially useful resource in carrying out committee work.

The House decides which members sit on a committee. The number on a committee varies, from about 10 to 18. Typically a committee of 13 would be made up of four Conservative, four Labour, two Liberal Democrat and three Crossbench members.



Who sits where



- Chairman
- Members
- Clerk
- Specialist adviser
- Transcribers
- Witnesses
- Public seating

Meetings

Who

Committees meet people, organisations and government representatives during their investigations to question them and hear different viewpoints.

When

Committees normally meet weekly, sometimes more. Meetings are scheduled throughout the day, Monday to Thursday. Dates and times are available in the weekly bulletin at www.parliament.uk/lords

Why

Committee work is a way for members to:

- investigate public policy and government activity in detail
- look at broad, long-term issues and produce in-depth reports on findings
- provoke discussion outside Parliament and make recommendations to government.

Where

Meetings take place in Parliament, in rooms on the committee corridor. (middle image, top row, page 7)
Locations are listed in the bulletin. Sometimes committees visit places and organisations outside Parliament.

How meetings happen

- 1 Committee meets briefly in private to discuss what questions to ask and what issues to focus on at the public meeting when the 'witness' (person being questioned) is present.
- 2 Witnesses, media and the public are invited in.
- 3 Members ask questions and follow up responses.
- 4 After witnesses leave, members discuss what they have heard.
- 5 Committees also meet in private to consider the conduct of their inquiries, to review their emerging conclusions and to consider their reports and recommendations.



Inquiries

How inquiries happen

- 1 Committee decides a subject to investigate.
- 2 It issues a 'call for evidence', asking any interested people or organisations for their views or information in writing.
- 3 It holds public meetings to hear from people in person (and sometimes visits places and organisations outside Parliament).
- 4 It meets to discuss and study the 'evidence' gathered.
- 5 It drafts and agrees a report, which is published.
- 6 Government gives a response, and the committee may follow it up.
- 7 The report may be debated – any member of the House of Lords can take part.

Language key

Chairman	Member responsible for leading a committee's activities
Clerk	Official of the House of Lords in charge of administering the committee and advising it on procedure
Evidence	Information and views gathered during investigations
Call for evidence	Request from a committee, at the start of an investigation, for information and views
Inquiry	Committee investigation
Minister	Member of the government responsible for part of government's work (eg schools)
Report	Publication outlining a committee's investigation findings, conclusions and recommendations
Specialist adviser	External expert advising the committee on the subject under investigation
Sub-committee	Smaller group of members, chosen for their specific knowledge and experience, who are asked to investigate a particular issue
Witness	Person providing information about the subject under investigation – in writing or by meeting with the committee

Find out more

Contact us or go online for information about business, membership and outreach activities.

Call or email us to request this publication in an alternative format.

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