



HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT
OUTREACH SERVICE



Understanding and Influencing Parliament

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www.parliament.uk

@UKParlOutreach

Session objectives

By the end of this session, you will have a greater understanding of:

- ▶ Parliament's work and role
- ▶ The work of the MPs and Members of the Lords
- ▶ Parliamentary Select Committees, Debates and Questions
- ▶ The work of the House of Commons Library and Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology
- ▶ Submitting evidence



Exercise

In your groups, complete the quiz:

- circle or tick the answers you think are correct
- don't worry if you don't know the answers
– have a guess!



What is Parliament?

House of Commons



House of Lords



The Monarch



What does Parliament do?























Scrutinises the work of the Government


Makes and passes laws (legislation)




Enables the Government to set taxes

Answer: b & d

	A	
	Abortion Act 1967 (Amendment) Bill [HL]	13.06.2014
	Affordable Homes Bill	03.07.2014
	Amenity Land (Adoption by Local Authorities) Bill	16.07.2014
	Arbitration and Mediation Services (Equality) Bill [HL]	12.06.2014
	Armed Forces (Prevention of Discrimination) Bill	08.07.2014
	Armed Forces (Service Complaints and Financial Assistance) Bill [HL]	16.07.2014
	Armed Forces Deployment (Royal Prerogative) Bill [HL]	11.06.2014
	Assisted Dying Bill [HL]	21.07.2014
	Asylum (Time Limit) Bill	08.07.2014
	B	
	Bat Habitats Regulation Bill	08.07.2014
	BBC (Trustee Election and Licence Fee) Bill [HL]	13.06.2014
	BBC Privatisation Bill	08.07.2014
	Benefit Entitlement (Restriction) Bill	08.07.2014
	British Bill of Rights and Withdrawal from the European Convention on Human Rights Bill	08.07.2014
	Buckinghamshire County Council (Filming on Highways) Bill	23.07.2014
	C	
	Chancel Repairs Bill [HL]	17.07.2014
	Child Benefit Entitlement (Disqualification of Non-UK EU Nationals) Bill	23.07.2014
	Childcare Payments Bill	15.07.2014
	Cohabitation Rights Bill [HL]	10.06.2014
	Consumer Rights Bill	02.07.2014

 Bill currently in the House of Lords

 Bill granted Royal Assent

Related information

Public Bill workshops

Want to learn more about engaging with Parliament's scrutiny of legislation? The Houses of Parliament's Outreach Service holds free regular workshops open to anyone interested in engaging with Public Bills.

Progress of Public Bills this session

The Progress of Public Bills list includes the dates of all stages of public bills laid before Parliament this session.

Private Members' Bills ballot

The Private Members' Bills ballot is held on the second sitting Thursday of a Parliamentary session. The 20 successful MPs are given priority in presenting a Bill of their choice and putting it down for second reading on one of the Private Members' Bills Fridays.

Guide to the passage of a Bill

Find out what happens at each stage of a Public Bill's journey through Parliament with the Passage of a Bill guide.

Human rights

Do you have expertise or a special interest in human rights? The Joint Committee on Human Rights scrutinises the human rights implications of Government Bills.

The House of Commons

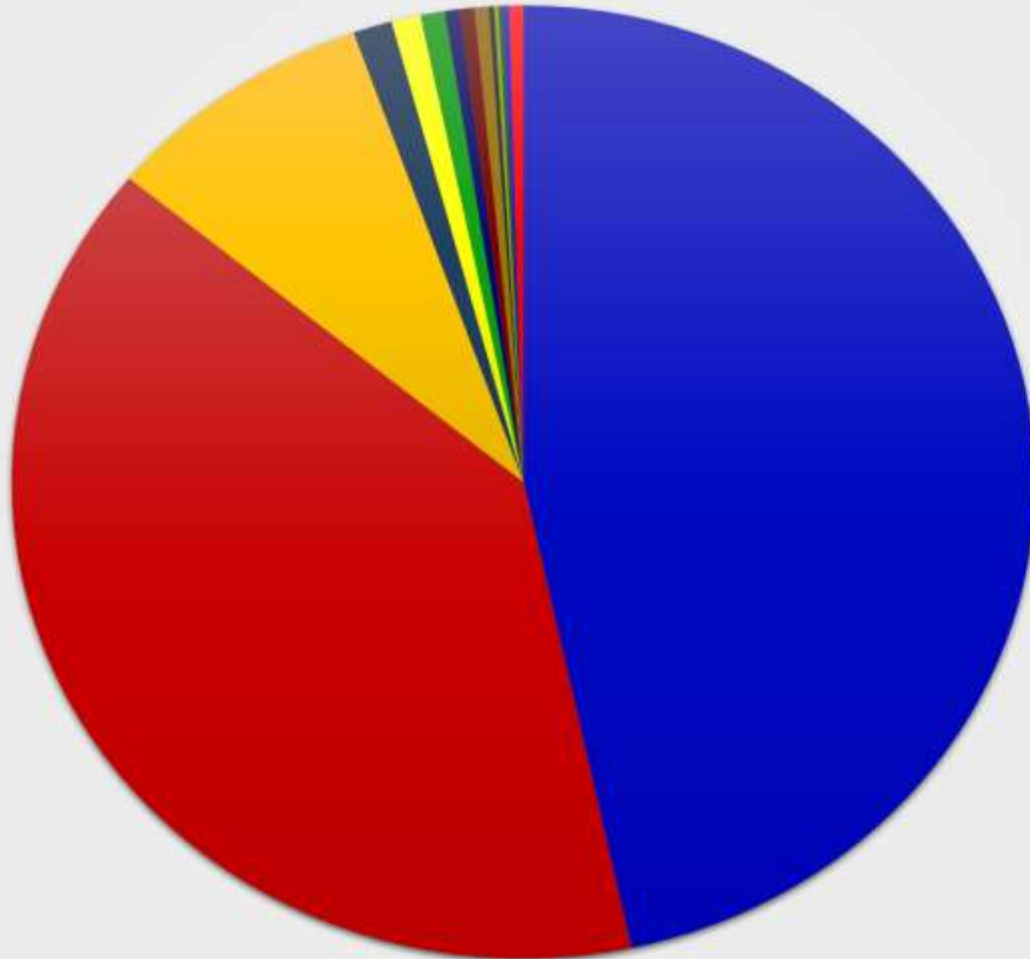
- ▶ The democratically elected chamber of Parliament
- ▶ There are currently 650 MPs



All MPs are elected every 5 years



State of the Parties



Conservative	303
Labour	257
Liberal Democrat	56
Democratic Unionist	8
Scottish National	6
Sinn Fein	5
Independent	3
Plaid Cymru	3
Social Democratic & Labour Party	3
UKIP	2
Alliance	1
Green	1
Respect	1
Speaker	1
Total number of seats	650

Current working Government Majority = 75

The House of Commons



Parliament (*Westminster*)



- Commons, Lords, Monarch
- Holds Government to account
- Passes laws
- Enables taxation
- Represents public
- Raises key issues

Government (*Whitehall*)



- Chosen by the Prime Minister
- Runs Government departments and public
- Accountable to Parliament
- Some MPs and some Lords

The House of Lords

- ▶ The second Chamber, also known as the revising House
- ▶ No party, or combination of parties has an overall majority in the House of Lords
- ▶ There are also many Cross-Benchers in the Lords, who are independent of party
- ▶ There are currently 794 eligible members:
 - 676 are Life Peers
 - 92 are Hereditary Peers
 - 26 are C of E Bishops



The House of Lords



Parliamentary activities



All Party Parliamentary Groups

Early Day Motions

Debates

Select Committees

Questions

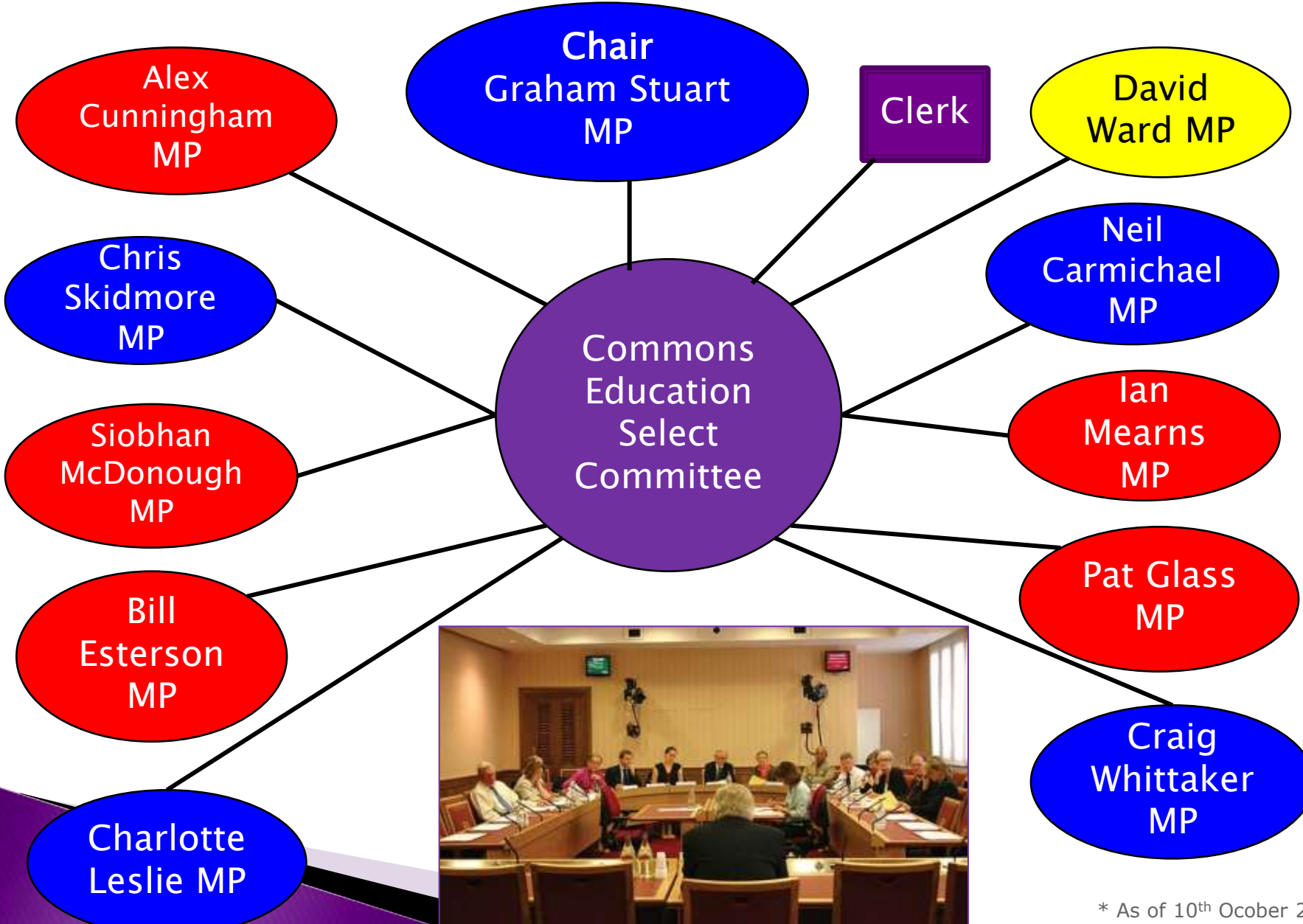


Select Committees

- Check and report on areas ranging from the work of government departments to economic affairs.
- A key way Parliament holds Government to account
- Enables Parliament to examine key issues in great detail – more than debates or questions
- Scrutiny is improved by huge range of available expertise
- Independent minded

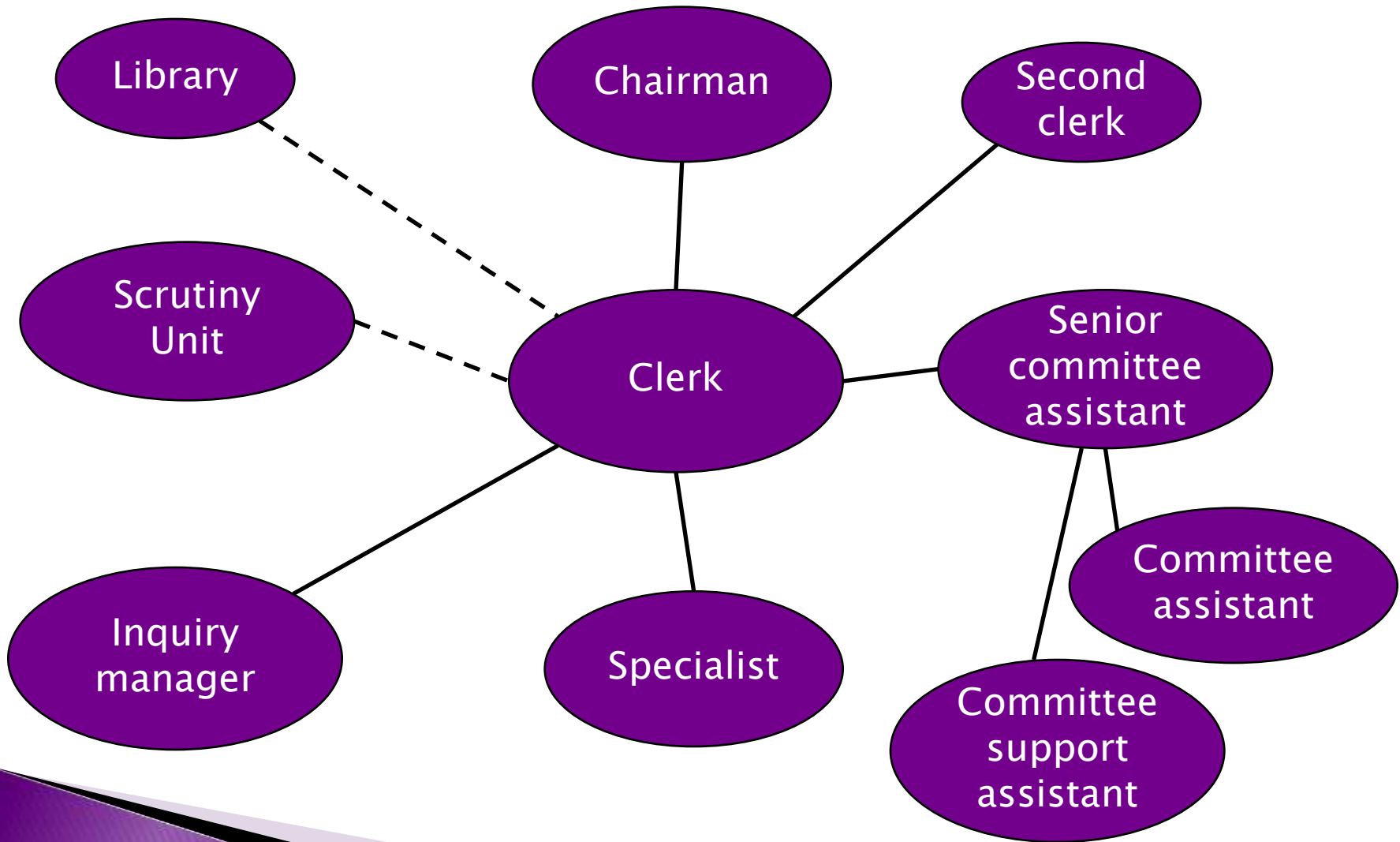


Commons select committees: Education Committee



* As of 10th October 2013

Commons select committees: staff



House of Lords select committees

- ▶ Examine issues rather than the work of specific departments
- ▶ Investigate specialist subjects which take advantage of the experience of members of the Lords
- ▶ Five main Lords select committees:
 - European Union Select Committee
 - Science and Technology Select Committee
 - Communications Select Committee
 - Constitution Select Committee
 - Economic Affairs Select Committees



Stages of an inquiry

1. Inquiry announced
2. Call for evidence
3. Written evidence deadline
4. Oral evidence sessions
5. Report preparation
6. Publication of report
7. Government response



Exercise

Look at the evidence submission.

1. What is good about it?
2. How do you think it could be improved?
3. How have those who submitted it considered their audience?

Submitting research to a Select Committee

- ▶ Use the terms of reference: you need to tailor your research to the specific inquiry
- ▶ Answer the questions posed in the Call for Evidence
- ▶ State clearly who the submission is from - "Written evidence submitted by xxxxxxxx"
- ▶ Begin with a short, **executive summary** in bullet form
- ▶ Have numbered paragraphs
- ▶ Any **factual information** you have to offer from which the committee might be able to draw conclusions, or which could be put to other witnesses for their reactions
- ▶ Any **recommendations** for action by the Government or others which you would like the committee to consider
- ▶ Write for an intelligent non-specialist: be relevant and concise

Impact of Select Committees

Direct impact

- ▶ Difficult to measure
- ▶ 40% of recommendations to Government accepted either partially or fully. (“Selective Influence: The Policy Impact of Select Committees” – research published in 2011 by Constitution Unit at UCL)

Indirect impact

- ▶ Influence on policy debates
- ▶ Highlighting issues which the Government might not have considered
- ▶ Offering expert independent advice
- ▶ Exposing wrongful acts or inconsistencies in Government policy
- ▶ Causing the Government to act in anticipation of a select committee inquiry
- ▶ Participation by the chair and other Committee members in conferences, think tanks, media appearances

Commons Select Committee inquiries

- **Criminal Cases Review Commission** | Justice Committee | Deadline: Friday 5 December 2014
- **2015 accountability hearing with the General Medical Council** | Health Committee | Deadline: Friday 5 December 2014
- **DFID's Annual Report and Accounts 2013-14** | International Development Committee | Deadline: Monday 8 December 2014
- **Benefit sanctions policy beyond the Oakley review** | Work and Pensions Committee | Deadline: Friday 12 December 2014
- **2015 accountability hearing with the Nursing and Midwifery Council** | Health Committee | Deadline: Friday 12 December 2014
- **End of life care** | Health Committee | Deadline: Monday 15 December 2014
- **Fuelling the debate: ECC Committee successes and future challenges** | Energy and Climate Change Committee | Deadline: Monday 15 December 2014
- **The impact of physical activity and diet on health** | Health Committee | Deadline: Wednesday 17 December 2014
- **Consultation on "A new Magna Carta?"** | Political and Constitutional Reform Committee | Deadline: Thursday 1 January 2015
- **Proposals on voter engagement** | Political and Constitutional Reform Committee | Deadline: Friday 9 January 2015
- **Work of the Communities and Local Government Committee** | Communities and Local Government Committee | Deadline: Monday 12 January 2015
- **Department for International Development's work in Nepal** | International Development Committee | Deadline: Monday 12 January 2015
- **Independent Commission on Aid Impact Annual Report 2013-14** | International Development Committee | Deadline: Open-ended
- **E-petitions** | Procedure Committee | Deadline: Open-ended
- **Administrative scheme for "on-the-runs"** | Northern Ireland Affairs Committee | Deadline: Open-ended
- **The Legacy Report - Parliament 2010-15** | Science and Technology Committee | Deadline: Open-ended

Guidance on written submissions


If you are considering sending a written submission please read the following guidelines:

- [Guidance on written submissions for House of Commons select committee inquiries](#)
- [Guidance on written submissions for House of Commons Public Bill Committees](#)
- [Guide for witnesses giving written or oral evidence to a select committee](#) (PDF 2.46 MB) 


Committee Bulletin

House of Lords Committee Bulletin

The House of Lords Committee Office publishes a daily bulletin detailing current inquiries, upcoming meetings, published reports and contact information.

- [House of Lords Committee Bulletin](#) (PDF 328 KB) 

POST, House of Commons and House of Lords Libraries

- ▶ Provide specialist impartial information and briefing service for MPs, Peers, their staff, committees and staff of the Houses
 - ▶ Produce wide range of briefing material
 - ▶ Available online at www.parliament.uk under research publications
- 

POST: What do MPs think?

- ▶ *"We have a language of our own ... We are a busy lot and so the more that we can get information which is easily digestible in a language we understand and usable in a language we can present, then yes."*
- ▶ *"I don't think we are short of information ... the quality of information is obviously an issue. The trouble is whenever anybody answers yes to that sort of question, what they finish up with is about ten times as much information, but not necessarily ten times as much understanding, so I don't want to trigger a great flood of scientific stuff. (MP 27)"*



FRIDAY

3

MAY

How else can MPs raise issues?

Parliamentary Questions

Written or oral questions - asked by MPs and Lords, directed at the Government

Debates

- ▶ Adjournment debates
- ▶ Westminster Hall debates
- ▶ Questions for Short Debate

Early Day Motions

- ▶ a published statement allowing MPs to show their opinion on a specific subject



All Party Parliamentary Groups

- ▶ informal cross-party groups on many different subjects, e.g.
 - Italy
 - Cuba
 - football
 - asthma
 - cider
 - ovarian cancer
 - cheese



The screenshot shows the website for The ALL PARTY Parliamentary University Group. The header is green with the group's name in white. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for HOME, MEETINGS, RESOURCES, COUNCIL, MEMBERS, COMMITTEES, LINKS, MEMBERS AREA, and CONTACTS. The main content area is yellow and contains the following text:

TEL: 0117 923 2938 - FAX: 0117 942 3968 - email: parliamentaryofficer@appg-universities.org.uk

The object of the All Party University Group is to provide the means by which Members of Parliament and university representatives can exchange interests and information to increase their mutual understanding of matters affecting Higher Education.

The All Party Parliamentary University Group was founded in 1994 by Members of Parliament and Peers to establish an avenue of communication and dialogue on the issues concerning Higher Education. It is now one of the largest Groups in the Palace of Westminster with over 250 Parliamentarians as members.

To achieve the main object of the Group, that of establishing an understanding between universities and Members of Parliament, the Group holds regular speaker meetings.

On the right side of the page, there is a photograph of a large group of people in graduation gowns and caps, with many caps being tossed into the air. Below the photograph is a green button that says "APPGS ON TWITTER" with a Twitter logo.

- ▶ APPGs are a useful way to identify MPs/Lords with an interest in a certain issue

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmallparty/register/contents.htm>

Briefing Parliamentarians

- ▶ Keep it brief
- ▶ Clear language – for an intelligent non specialist
- ▶ Be objective – let facts and research speak for themselves

- ▶ *Who are you and why are you contacting them?*

- ▶ *What is the issue and why is it relevant now?*

- ▶ *What is the impact/ who will it affect?*

- ▶ *What do you want to happen?*

Where can I get information?

- www.parliament.uk
- Twitter **@UKParliament @UKParlOutreach**
- **Commons Information Office**
020 7219 4272 hcinfo@parliament.uk
- **Lords Information Office**
020 7219 3107 hlinfo@parliament.uk
- **Parliament's Outreach Service**
020 7219 1650 parliamentaryoutreach@parliament.uk