



The House of Lords is an essential part of the UK Parliament and one of the busiest legislative chambers in the world. Its members work on behalf of the UK public, using their professional experience and specialist knowledge to ensure workable laws, often persuading the government to make policy changes on a diverse range of issues.

Contents

Work of the House of Lords	1
Making effective laws	2
Looking at the small print	12
Holding the government to account	14
Influencing public policy	24
Building international relationships	34
Reaching out	36
Facts and figures	38

Work of the House of Lords

This booklet looks at the work of members of the Lords during the 2012-13 parliamentary session. It ran from 9 May 2012 to 25 April 2013.

During this period, the House of Lords spent 137 days working to check the details in draft laws (bills), challenge government action and debate policy.

Most of the time in the chamber was spent checking, debating and changing legislation: examining 71 bills, considering 3,581 changes and making 1,132 of them. In total, 38 laws were made. Extensive scrutiny work was carried out, asking the government 7,324 questions and holding 196 debates.

Its investigative committees made 36 reports and it set up one-off committees to look into adoption and public services for the UK's ageing population.



Making effective laws

Parliament's main role is to examine bills and approve new laws. The Lords plays a crucial role in the process, debating the main principles, checking their content line by line and suggesting improvements. Members also help to ensure that all new laws are well drafted, effective and workable.

Creating law

The House of Lords shares responsibility for lawmaking with the House of Commons. Prior to becoming Acts of Parliament, bills (draft laws) are debated and checked by both Houses. Bills go through set stages in both Houses – where their purpose and detail can be examined – before they receive royal assent (are signed off by the Queen) and become Acts of Parliament (law).

The House of Lords is known for rigorously checking the detail of a bill, working to address potential problems and close any loopholes to make better, more effective laws. Its amendments may or may not be agreed by the House of Commons, but the Lords has a crucial ability to ask the government and Commons to think again and, in some cases, put forward alternative amendments in response.

2012-13 session

During the session, 38 bills were introduced into Parliament by the government and received royal assent, passing into law.

“We in this House have an important role. We can advise, but it is the elected House of Commons who decides.”
Lord Fowler (Conservative)

71 bills checked

3,581 changes considered

1,132 changes made

38 bills became law

Scrutinising, advising and revising

In 2012-13 the House of Lords checked and revised some major pieces of legislation, using its powers to persuade the government and the Commons to make changes to legislation affecting a wide range of people and policy areas.

Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013

Two areas covered by this bill, employment rights and local planning, raised concerns in the House of Lords.

Employment rights

A proposed employee-shareholder scheme allowed employees to receive company shares in return for giving up some rights, for example the right to statutory redundancy pay, claim unfair dismissal or request flexible working. Some members, concerned that this allowed employers to 'buy off' employment rights, voted to remove it from the bill. The Commons overturned this change but the Lords won concessions relating to rights and protections for employees that don't want to enter into an employee-shareholder contract.

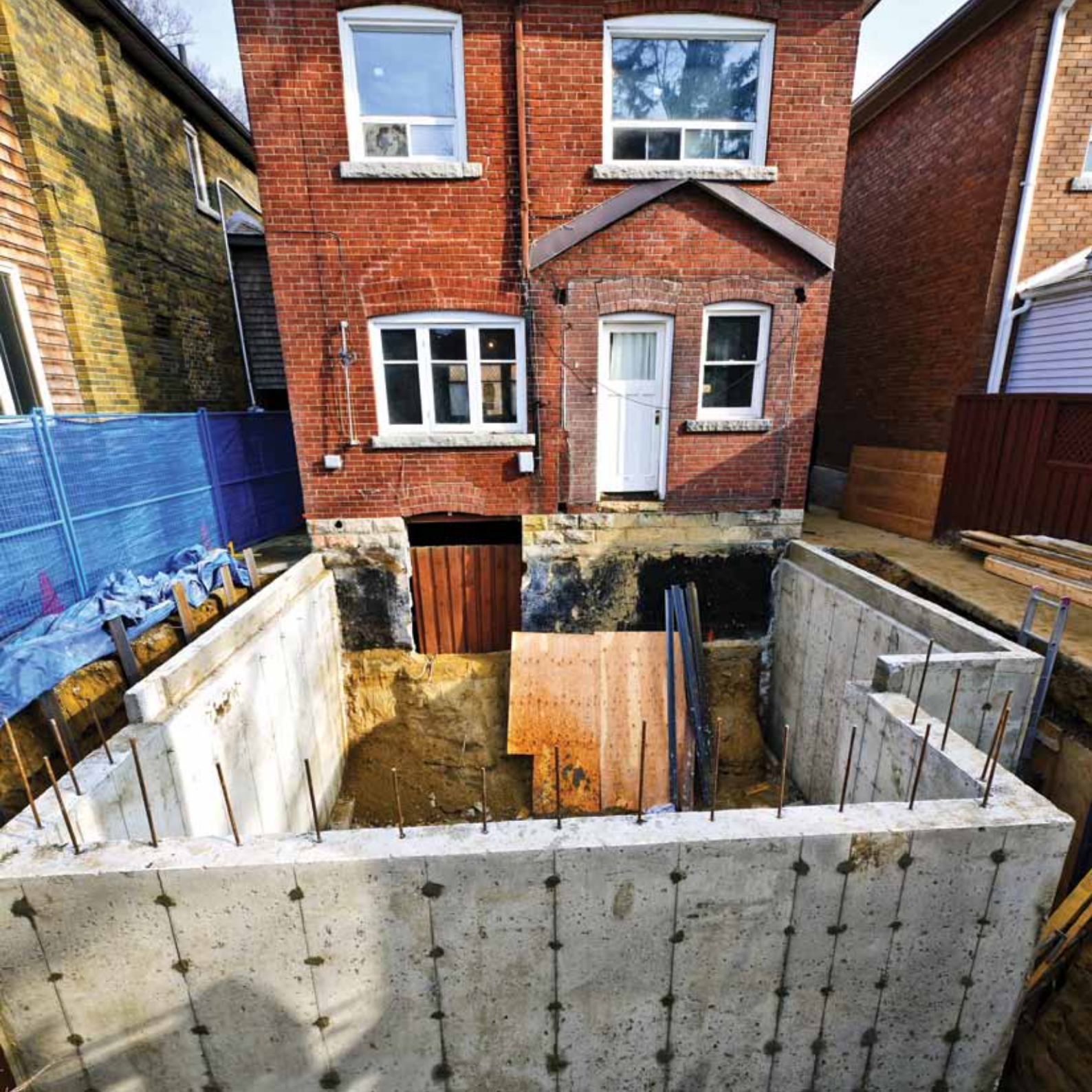
The House also accepted a government proposal offered in response to members' concerns requiring employers to:

- set out the advantages and disadvantages of shares and the loss of employment rights
- give employees at least seven days to decide
- pay for independent legal advice for employees before entering into a employee-shareholder contract.

Protecting the input of neighbours in local planning

The bill also relaxed rules so that some single-storey home extensions could be built without council consent. Members argued to reinstate the right of a neighbour to comment on residential extensions, saying home owners wanting to build extensions should consider neighbours' concerns, and conciliation and moderation were a vital part of the local planning process.

The House of Lords made a change to the bill to allow councils to opt out of the scheme. It was overturned in the Commons but the Lords continued to press the issue. To reach an agreement, the government proposed to revise the scheme so that home owners wishing to build extensions would have to notify their council and it would then inform neighbours; if there were no objections building could go ahead but if neighbours raised objections then the council would have to take steps to consider them.



Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013

This bill put forward a wide range of measures spanning competition policy and employment law, regulation, directors' remuneration and rules about copyright and planning.

The House of Lords made important changes to:

- reinstate the right of employees to use health and safety breaches to make compensation claims for personal injury
- make letting agents (previously unregulated) join a redress scheme
- give the Office of Fair Trading (OFT), which currently only has the power to ban estate agents from estate agency work, the power to remove letting agents and stop banned estate agents setting up new businesses as lettings agents.



Key debates in the Lords focused on two issues of equality:

Section 3 of the Equality Act 2006

Section 3 of the Equality Act sets out the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) duty to protect human rights and promote a more equal society. The bill proposed repealing section 3 but the House of Lords voted to retain it, arguing the EHRC, the UK's only national human rights institution, would be weakened without it.

Outlawing caste discrimination

The Lords made a change to include caste in existing race discrimination laws. Members highlighted discrimination against British Dalits – 'untouchables' – who have no means of legal redress when they suffer discrimination because of their caste. The government proposed an education programme but members pushed for a law; Lord Harries of Pentregarth (Crossbench) said that 'nothing could be more significant and effective in reducing discrimination... than having a clear-cut law'.

“Lords boost for lettings regulation... Landlords and tenants are a step closer to securing protection against rogue letting agents after the House of Lords this week voted in favour of regulating the industry.”
Financial Times

Leveson: the perspective from the Lords.

Defamation Act 2013, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 and the Crime and Courts Act 2013

The Crime and Courts Bill aimed to set up the National Crime Agency and make provisions about the judiciary, courts and tribunals, border control and drug driving. The Defamation Bill set out to ensure a fair balance between the right to freedom of expression and the protection of reputation, and to modernise the law to cover online media.

These bills were examined by the House after the publication of Lord Justice Leveson's report into the culture, practice and ethics of the press. Members used the Defamation Bill and the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill to get some of its recommendations into legislation.

5 February: At report stage of the Defamation Bill the House of Lords discussed a change to include a system for the public to access low-cost arbitration that would 'pre-clear' stories before they could be published. Some members said the Defamation Bill was the wrong place for the scheme; they argued the bill's scope only provided for defamation, not privacy, and many thought that a Leveson recommendation shouldn't be added to

the bill because the main political parties needed to reach a consensus on press regulation. After debate, the amendment was agreed to.

25 February: At third reading, concerns were raised that the 'pre-clearance' element of the scheme went further than Leveson's recommendation; a change to the report stage amendment was made to take out the 'pre-clearance' requirement.

18 March: A (report stage) change to the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill was accepted, to provide for Parliament's approval of changes to royal charters – although not specified, this was intended to protect the royal charter on self-regulation of the press from ministerial change.

23 April: The three main political parties had reached agreement on a draft royal charter for self-regulation of the press. The Lords agreed to take out their Leveson-related changes to the Defamation Bill in place of recommendations inserted in the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill and Crime and Courts Bill. The arbitration and damages scheme was inserted in the Crime and Courts Bill and members agreed to a further change setting out the definition of a 'relevant publisher' so that bloggers were excluded from the scheme.

Public legislation 2012–13

More public bill sessional statistics – including a breakdown of amendments by stage, grand committee proceedings and details of all bills receiving royal assent – can be found online at parliament.uk/lords.

Bills introduced in the House of Lords	Amendments tabled	Amendments made	Government defeats
Government Bills			
Crime and Courts	504	226	4
European Union (Approval of Treaty Amendment Decision)	5	0	0
European Union (Approvals)	0	0	0
Groceries Code Adjudicator	194	19	0
Justice and Security	206	21	3
Partnerships (Prosecution) (Scotland)	1	0	0
Statute Law (Repeals)	0	0	0
Trusts (Capital and Income)	4	0	0
Total	914	266	7

	Amendments tabled	Amendments made
Private Members' Bills		
Age of Criminal Responsibility	0	0
Airports (Amendment)	0	0
Alan Turing (Statutory Pardon)	0	0
Arbitration and Mediation Services (Equality)	0	0
BBC Trust Chairman (Election)	0	0
Caravan Sites	0	0
Company Remuneration	0	0
Contaminated Blood (Support for Infected and Bereaved Persons)	0	0
Electric Personal Vehicles (Use on Highways)	0	0
European Parliamentary Elections	0	0
Extension of Franchise (House of Lords)	0	0
Hereditary Peerages (Succession)	0	0
Higher Education (Fees)	0	0
House of Lords (Cessation of Membership)	0	0
Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Further Provisions and Support for Victims)	0	0
Independent Press Council	0	0
Inheritance (Cohabitants)	0	0
Interception of Communications (Admissibility of Evidence)	0	0
Littering from Vehicles	0	0
Marine Navigation	0	0
Marriage (Approved Organisations)	0	0
Medical Innovation	0	0
Membership of the House of Lords (Elections)	0	0
Mental Health (Discrimination)	0	0
National Health Service (Amended Duties and Powers)	0	0
Online Safety	0	0
Presumption of Death and Provisions Relating to Missing Persons	0	0
Referendum (European Union)	0	0
Rights of the Sovereign and the Duchy of Cornwall	0	0
Smoke-free Private Vehicles	0	0
Social Care Portability	0	0
Voting Age (Comprehensive Reduction)	0	0
Wind Turbines (Minimum Distance from Residential Premises)	0	0
Total	0	0

Bills brought from the House of Commons	Amendments tabled	Amendments made	Government defeats
Government Bills			
Civil Aviation	159	75	0
Defamation	105	17	2
Electoral Registration and Administration	89	27	1
Enterprise and Regulatory Reform	505	143	4
European Union			
(Croatian Accession and Irish Protocol)	0	0	0
Finance	0	0	0
Financial Services	833	312	0
Growth and Infrastructure	280	40	2
HGV Road User Levy	0	0	0
Infrastructure (Financial Assistance)	0	0	0
Jobseekers (Back to Work Schemes)	8	0	0
Local Government Finance	286	94	1
Mental Health (Approval Functions)	0	0	0
Police (Complaints and Conduct)	0	0	0
Public Service Pensions	247	138	1
Small Charitable Donations	0	0	0
Succession to the Crown	36	0	0
Supply and Appropriation			
(Anticipation and Adjustments)	0	0	0
Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates)	0	0	0
Welfare Benefits Up-rating	41	0	0
Total	2589	846	11

	Amendments tabled	Amendments made
Private Members' Bills		
Antarctic	0	0
Disabled Persons' Parking Badges	0	0
Marine Navigation (No. 2)	4	0
Mental Health (Discrimination) (No. 2)	0	0
Mobile Homes	0	0
Presumption of Death	0	0
Prevention of Social Housing Fraud	0	0
Prisons (Interference with Wireless Telegraphy)	0	0
Prisons (Property)	0	0
Wreck Removal Convention	3	0
Total	7	0

Looking at the small print

Delegated legislation – also known as secondary or subordinate legislation – fills in the details of Acts of Parliament, setting out the practical measures that enable a law to operate in the way the Act intended. The details in regulations, orders or rules, are known generally as statutory instruments (SIs).

Quality control

SIs are more easily changed than legislation and so can be updated, for example to allow applications for benefits to be made electronically.

Although the power to make SIs is delegated to ministers, they can still be subject to parliamentary scrutiny. Delegated legislation can make quite major changes to our daily lives; these changes in 2012-13 have all been brought about by SIs:

- the introduction of Universal Credit
- the restructuring of the NHS
- changes to the Financial Services Authority.

The House of Lords has two committees dedicated to this area of legislation, each focusing on a different stage in the legislative process:

- Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee
- Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee.



Before an Act is made: what level of scrutiny?

The Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee examines the text of all bills before they go forward for detailed consideration in the House of Lords to ensure that any power they give to ministers to make SIs is subject to the appropriate level of parliamentary scrutiny. This committee has earned a formidable reputation as a 'watchdog' and the government almost always accepts its recommendations.

After an Act is made: quality control

The Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee considers the policy aspects of all SIs to assess whether they seem likely to achieve their stated policy objective. Through its weekly reports, the committee draws particularly interesting, potentially defective or poorly explained SIs to the attention of the House, so that members can ask a question or request a debate on the matter.

In 2012-13, it made influential reports on:

- National Health Service (Procurement, Patient Choice and Competition) Regulations 2013
- Personal Independence Payments
- the government's proposals to revise the consultation process.

It also examined a number of orders to abolish or merge public bodies, in particular on the merger of the Gambling Commission with the National Lottery Commission and on the proposed abolition of the Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council.

There is also a joint committee with members from both Houses that looks at the legal drafting of SIs to see if the law is clear and fits within the scope of the Act under which they are made.

23 bills reported

51 reports to the House on SIs

893 SIs examined

61 SIs drawn to the attention of the House

Holding the government to account

Around 40 per cent of the time in chamber is spent holding the government to account for its decisions and actions through questions and debates to which ministers and government spokespeople must respond.

Questions

A 30-minute question time takes place at the start of business in the chamber from Monday to Thursday. A maximum of four questions are posed by members. They can be on any subject – local, national or international – for which the government is responsible.

Once the government spokesperson has answered, there is then a chance for a short exchange of related, or ‘supplementary’, questions. The government spokesperson must answer each one. Questions may also be asked in writing and the government must respond within two weeks.

Statements

The government announces important policy initiatives and reports on national and international issues in the chamber. Statements are usually made in both Houses and are followed in the Lords by the opportunity for members to ask questions and make observations.

Debates

Debates allow members to put their experience to good use by drawing the government’s attention to particular concerns and ideas. At the end of every debate, a government minister or spokesperson responds to the questions, concerns and points that have been raised.

The diversity of the membership of the House is reflected in the range of subjects covered – illustrated by the examples set out on the following pages – and debates in the Lords can play an important role in shaping future policy initiatives and legislation.

499 oral questions

6,816 written questions

75 oral statements

1,153 written statements

Debates

China and multilateral nuclear disarmament

22 November 2012

The five permanent members – China, France, Russia, the USA and the UK – of the United Nations (UN) security council, known as ‘the P5’, have committed to nuclear disarmament; discussions between them are ongoing.

Members with experience of international relations and diplomacy at the highest level spoke in this debate, including:

- a former foreign secretary (who negotiated the terms of the handover of Hong Kong)
- a former secretary of state for defence
- a former defence minister
- a former deputy prime minister
- a former governor of Hong Kong
- a former UK ambassador and permanent representative to the UN.

Discussions on nuclear disarmament

Former secretary of state for defence, Lord Browne of Ladyton (Labour), said the international community needed to prepare for diplomatic discussions if states with nuclear weapons are serious about achieving a nuclear-free world, and that dealing with China is key. He pointed to the difficulties of the UK and other

European countries in contributing to discussions between Russia, China and the USA, and highlighted the degree of secrecy that surrounds the nuclear arsenal of different states. He said reports of P5 discussions should be made available to Parliament.

Emerging significance of China

Baroness Williams of Crosby (Liberal Democrat), a member of the Nuclear Threat Initiative board of directors, said China is of great significance and it is crucial for the UK to develop a deeper understanding and engagement with it ‘because we are now looking at the second greatest economic power in the world, and perhaps the third greatest military power’. Former UK ambassador and permanent representative to the UN, Lord Hannay of Chiswick (Crossbench), reiterated this: ‘China’s role as a global actor in pretty well every sphere of policy is on the rise. Clearly that goes for nuclear policy too.’ He said bilateral discussions between the UK and China could contribute towards success in wider multilateral negotiations on disarmament.

China’s leadership, law and jurisprudence

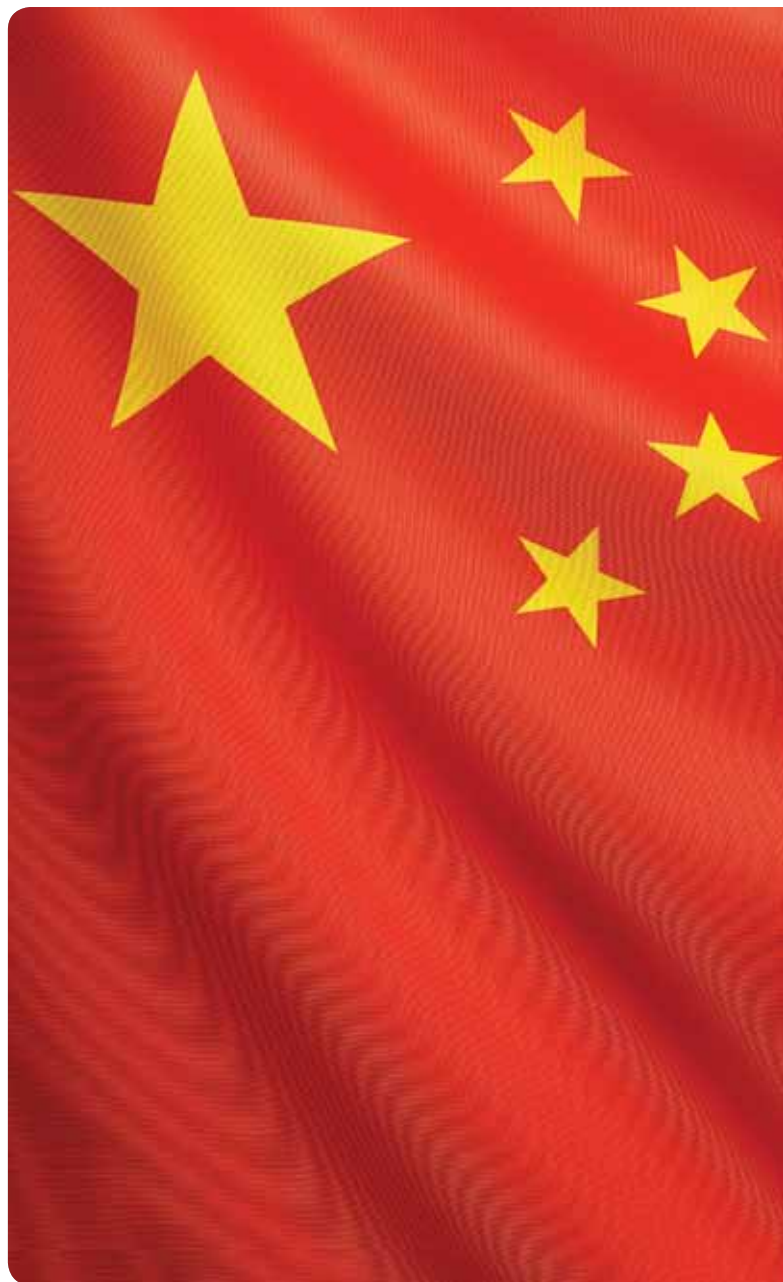
Former foreign secretary, Lord Howe of Aberavon (Conservative), said his own experience of negotiations with China during the handover of Hong Kong demonstrated the Chinese leadership’s respect for legal systems, arguing the importance of an international legal approach to securing agreement on nuclear weapons.

Lord Wilson of Tillyorn (Crossbench), former governor of Hong Kong and Sinologist, also spoke of China's new leadership and jurisprudence. He said their education and backgrounds, for example the study of law, should give the international community encouragement.

International community and changing dynamics

Lord Wilson of Tillyorn also said China's economic growth, which has pulled millions of people out of poverty, has given China greater influence and involvement in international relations. This raises issues of trust and transparency – for example in its military aims and expenditure – but the international community should be prepared to adjust its organisations to encompass China. Former deputy prime minister, Lord Prescott (Labour), reinforced this point setting out China's key participation in getting the Kyoto agreement (in which he represented the UK) to go ahead.

Lord Wallace of Saltaire (Liberal Democrat), responding for the government, welcomed the constructive role China was playing in the P5 exchanges on nuclear disarmament but said that increased transparency by China would help build trust in diplomatic relations. He also set out the steps the government is taking to proactively engage with China.



Older people's contribution to society

17 December 2012

Former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, opened the debate (his last as Archbishop of Canterbury), raising the perception of older people in society and their contribution to it. Among the members taking part in this debate were the vice president of Carers UK, the president of the Grandparents' Association, a government adviser on the Big Society and adviser for the Community Network Foundation and a trustee of the Policy Research Institute on Ageing and Ethnicity.

The debate covered wide-ranging issues, points raised included:

- the changing demographics of the UK population and the youngest ever retiring generation
- the new skill set of retirees and how it could be supported to benefit society
- the contribution made by older people as providers of social care and childcare
- more than half the over-60 population are involved in some sort of formal and structured voluntary work; the estimated value of the voluntary work already done in caring and family maintenance by the over-60s is in the region of £50 billion
- the vulnerability of older people may leave them open to abuse
- the need for integrated care in the home, hospital and care home.

Baroness Warsi (Conservative), senior minister of state for faith and communities, responded on behalf of the government saying that the mark of a good society is how well it treats its older people. She concluded: 'Older people are not just recipients, they are contributors. They are not just helped by volunteers, they are the volunteers. They are not just the cared-for, they are the carers. This growing proportion of our population should not be seen as an issue but as an asset.'



Olympics: the arts and creative industries delivering the legacy

24 January 2013

East London

Lord Mawson (Crossbench), who has led East London regeneration projects, said that empowering local people to invest in themselves would enable them to build a sustainable social legacy. Lord King of Bridgwater (Conservative), a former secretary of state involved in developing east London and in setting up the ExCel exhibition centre, said the quality of the facilities and infrastructure in place would strengthen the development of its communities.

Cultural Olympiad

Baroness Andrews (Labour), chair of English Heritage, spoke of the Cultural Olympiad breaking down barriers 'between culture, the arts, heritage and technologies. It encouraged risk, shoved out the boundaries... showed that there are innovative ways of bringing arts and heritage together'. Chair of the Cultural Olympiad, Lord Hall of Birkenhead (Crossbench), highlighted its high level of participation, in particular by young people. He said that opportunities for cultural participation should be sustained and that 'the arts must remain at the heart of the national curriculum to allow all children, regardless of background, the chance to develop their creative talents and contribute in future to our world-leading arts and creative industries.'

Opening ceremony

Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury (Liberal Democrat) said the opening ceremony was a showcase for UK creative industries. Lord Birt (Crossbench), former BBC director general, said the skill and quality of its production drew the world's attention to UK traditions and the dynamism of contemporary British culture: '[it] was a powerful statement about Britishness, not just for us but for the rest of the world, and this statement will bring the UK many benefits in multiple spheres.'

Young people and education

Paralympian Baroness Grey-Thompson (Crossbench) said Danny Boyle opened up the Games to a young generation. Other members spoke of the educational opportunities the Olympics provided for young people: Baroness Benjamin (Liberal Democrat), former children's television broadcaster, argued they should be the legacy's priority and arts organisations should be specifically tasked with creating the legacy through projects for children – and receive funding to do this.

Lord Gardiner of Kimble (Conservative) responded for the government: 'London 2012 made people proud to be British and to be part of their local community. We want to ensure that people continue to have opportunities to come together.' He also said that physical education will remain a core part of education.

General debates 2012–13

May 2012

- Euro area crisis*
- Olympic and Paralympic Games 2012
- Food security policy
- Contribution of minority ethnic and religious communities to the UK

June 2012

- European rail market*
- Role of schools for the well-being and needs of children and young people
- Youth unemployment and social consequences
- Elections to the National Assembly for Wales
- Nuclear research and development
- Financial framework*
- Growth strategy for the UK economy
- Voluntary sector and social enterprise
- Education and training for people with hidden disabilities
- English cathedrals

July 2012

- Welfare and transportation of horses
- UK industry
- Financial transaction tax*
- Behaviour change*
- Families in rented housing
- Political representation and Parliamentary Boundary Commission

- Middle East
- European Union: drugs strategy*
- UK Border Agency
- Devolution in Wales

October 2012

- Higher education*
- Child development
- Sudan and South Sudan*
- Chief Scientific Advisers*
- Centenary of Scott expedition to Antarctica
- Developing excellence in education
- Development aid*
- Defence capabilities
- Children in care
- Media standards and regulation

November 2012

- Future of the police service
- Planning policy
- UK armed forces
- Early years education
- Legacy of the Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Multilateral nuclear disarmament and China
- Millennium Development Goals
- NHS diabetic services
- Social care

December 2012

- EU: freshwater policy*
- UK Ugandan Asian community
- UK's new global role, emerging powers and new markets
- Israel's Arab citizens
- Credit unions
- Contribution of older people in society
- Recent developments in the EU

January 2013

- Gender balance among non-executive directors*
- Decline of bee population
- Disability services for people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds
- Leveson report
- Local Government Finance Settlement
- Impact on families of changes to tax and benefits
- European Banking Union*
- Prospects for multilateral nuclear disarmament and UK contribution
- Role of communities, the arts and creative industries in delivering a lasting Olympic legacy
- Economic growth
- Impact of student visa policy on UK university admissions
- EU: Prime Minister's speech

February 2013

- Accountability of civil servants*

March 2013

- Strengthened statutory procedures for the scrutiny of delegated legislation*
- Commonwealth and Commonwealth Charter
- International Women's Day
- Afghanistan's regional relationships and their impact on the long-term future
- Broadband*
- Higher Education: STEM subjects*
- Budget statement and UK economy

April 2013

- EU: Annual Growth Survey 2013

* Debate on committee report

Short debates 2012–13

May 2012

- Small and micro-business borrowing
- Riots, Communities and Victims Panel's report
- Historical Manuscripts Commission
- Claims management companies
- NATO Deterrence and Defence Posture Review
- UK and commonwealth faith communities

June 2012

- Access to Work mental health support service
- Regeneration strategy
- Support for people with dementia

July 2012

- Access to water in the West Bank
- Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
- Strategy for the arts and cultural sector
- Drinks industry and government's alcohol strategy
- HS2 rail network
- Coastal access in England
- National Health Service specialised services
- Funding and expansion of the British Council

October 2012

- NHS mental health services
- Better running of zoos
- Britain's industrial base
- Human rights in Bangladesh
- Increase in cancer of the head and neck
- UK Trade and Investment and SMEs

- Further education colleges
- Music school (conservatoire) funding
- Employment and training for young offenders
- Bus industry
- Park homes sector
- Cyprus
- Piracy in the Indian Ocean
- Treatment of homosexual men and women in the developing world
- Building Stability Overseas Strategy

November 2012

- UK armed forces
- Protecting the British ash tree
- Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus
- Teaching of classics in schools
- Welsh economic challenges
- Death at home
- Higher education
- EU action to increase gender diversity on boards
- Neurological and epilepsy services
- Religion in UK society
- Advice for people with small pension funds
- HMS Victory
- Violence against women

December 2012

- Regulation of the legal profession
- UN Resolution on the status of Palestine
- Future Homes Commission report
- Economic growth
- Government strategy for energy efficiency

- Multinational companies, UK tax policies and developing countries
- Financial powers for Wales
- Nursing education
- Voluntary sector involvement in delivering public services
- Abuse of people with a learning disability
- Impact on health of active lifestyles

January 2013

- Future of the armed forces
- Sri Lanka
- Rape in armed conflict
- Biological threats
- English Baccalaureate Certificate: arts subjects
- Training and work programmes in prisons
- Medical innovation
- Unemployment
- Korean peninsula
- Freedom of religion and conscience
- Kashmir
- Air Passenger Duty
- Role of the arts in regional and economic regeneration
- Combating neglected tropical diseases
- Industry and economic developments in north-east England

February 2013

- Academies and free schools
- Local and regional democracy in Europe
- Chronic fatigue syndrome
- UK publishing industry
- Civil society in Israel and Palestine
- Sexual offences and women's safety

- Anorexia and eating disorders
- Impact of HS2 rail network
- Independent Panel on Forestry report
- Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile
- Voting age
- Vocational education

March 2013

- First World War centenary
- Sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations
- Care services for elderly people
- Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust
- Discrimination against gay people in Commonwealth countries and halting the spread of HIV/AIDS
- Future UK demographic trends
- Defence procurement
- Ethical and sustainable fashion
- Diabetes
- Police: performance indicator management
- Children: developmental care and autism
- Global health

April 2013

- Severn barrage
- Role of nuclear power in helping to meet UK climate change and energy security goals
- UK isolation in the EU
- Implications of refugees from Syria
- Support for people at risk of suicide
- Herbal medicines: statutory register for practitioners
- Maximising UK tourism potential
- Personal, social and health education in schools

Influencing public policy

The House of Lords also examines public policy through its select committees. Members use their professional experience to carry out investigative, subject-focused work. Committees are a valuable way to provoke discussion inside and outside Parliament and make recommendations to government.

Committee work

Committees are smaller groups of members, appointed by the House to conduct certain tasks on its behalf, which meet outside the chamber. They consider specific policy areas or issues – ranging from short, narrowly focused investigations to broad, long-term inquiries – and usually produce reports on their findings. Once published, committee reports are debated in the House and the government must respond.

Experience of the membership

House of Lords committees benefit from the professional experience and knowledge of the members of the House, which ensures their work carries authority within Parliament and beyond.

Five permanent committees

There are five main select committees. They develop expertise in particular subject areas – outlined in pages 26 to 31 – and may revisit subjects covered in previous inquiries to assess the impact of their recommendations.

During the 2012–13 session, these committees published 36 reports on subjects ranging from economic affairs, to the powers of the EU and advances in science and technology.

Reports

Reports drew the government's attention to Lords committees' views on the:

- economic implications of Scottish independence
- selection and diversity of judges
- merging of broadcast, print and online media.

One-off and joint committees

The House of Lords also regularly appoints short-term committees to examine particular subjects. In addition, some committees are appointed jointly with the House of Commons, for example to conduct pre-legislative scrutiny.

Economic Affairs Committee

The committee investigates current economic issues and reviews the performance and behaviour of the economy. Its members include business leaders, economists and a former chancellor of the exchequer.

Scottish independence – key economic issues

The report highlighted key economic issues the Scottish and UK governments should address to help voters make an informed choice in the 2014 referendum. It took evidence from both governments, other key politicians, business people and organisations, academics and other economic experts.

Currency

The committee said this is the most important economic decision an independent Scotland would face, and pointed to problems around keeping sterling and the Bank of England as the central bank.

Assets and debt

In the event of Scottish independence, the committee recommended that physical assets be divided on the basis of location and debt apportioned on population size.

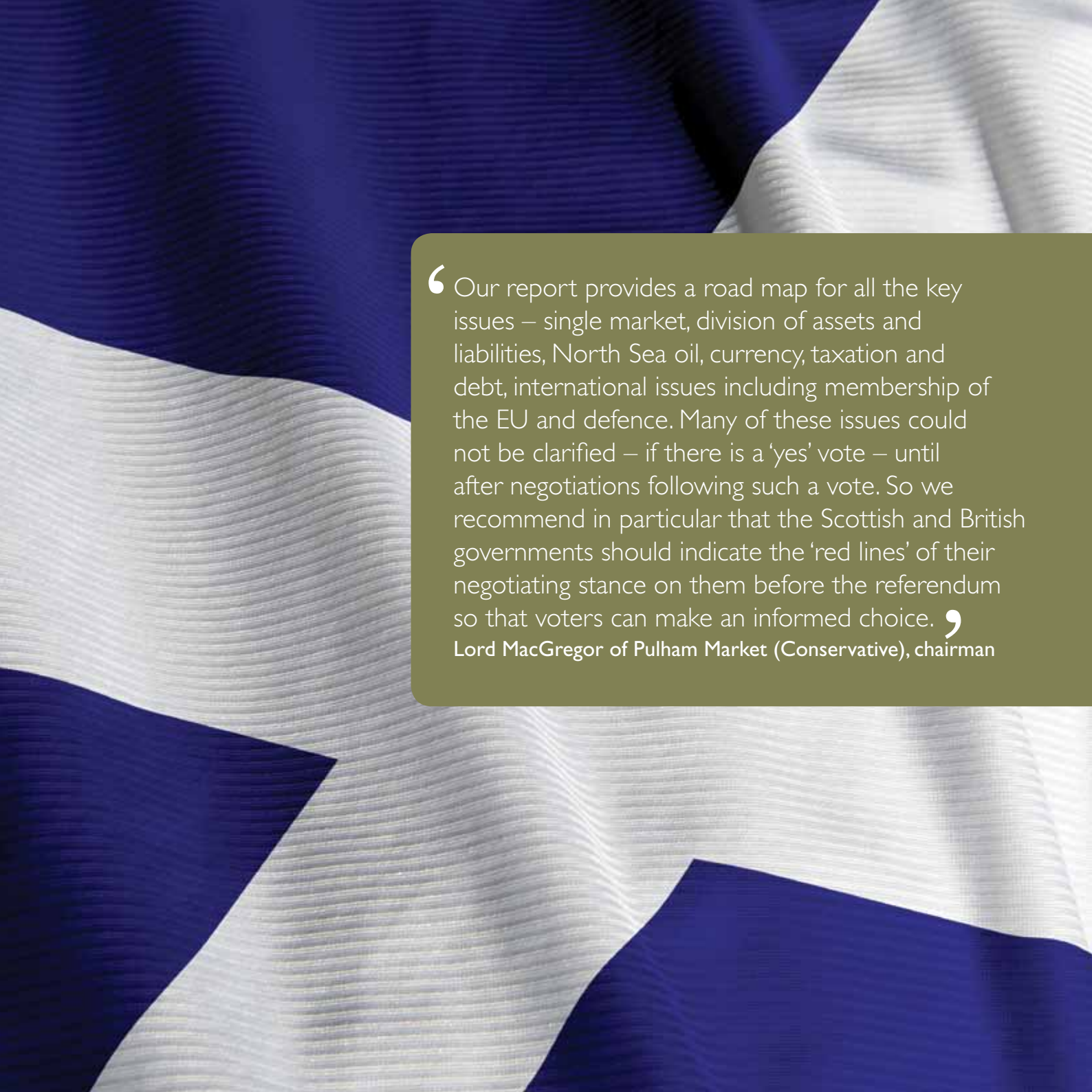
EU membership

The President of the European Commission confirmed that an independent Scotland would have to apply for EU membership and all existing member states would have to ratify accession – some have concerns about separatist regions within their own countries, so ratification may not be straightforward. As a new member state, Scotland may also lose current UK opt-outs and have to commit to joining the Euro in the future.

Defence

The committee recommended that the Ministry of Defence raise awareness about defence and related economic implications of Scottish independence – for example, the relocation of the UK's nuclear deterrent could have significant cost and logistical implications for the rest of the UK. The committee also heard evidence that up to 25,000 defence jobs in Scotland could be lost and said the Scottish government should set out its own defence plan and spending predictions.

The committee also published its report 'The Draft Finance Bill 2013' in 2012-13.



“ Our report provides a road map for all the key issues – single market, division of assets and liabilities, North Sea oil, currency, taxation and debt, international issues including membership of the EU and defence. Many of these issues could not be clarified – if there is a ‘yes’ vote – until after negotiations following such a vote. So we recommend in particular that the Scottish and British governments should indicate the ‘red lines’ of their negotiating stance on them before the referendum so that voters can make an informed choice. ”

Lord MacGregor of Pulham Market (Conservative), chairman

Communications Committee

The committee investigates public policy areas related to the media and the creative industries. Its membership includes media professionals and people from other backgrounds with relevant experience in industry, politics and law.

Media convergence – the merging of broadcast, print and online media

Media, which used to be distinct because of the different ways they were distributed, have converged on one technology – the internet. Our habits and expectations are changing. The committee investigated the issues this presents, for example:

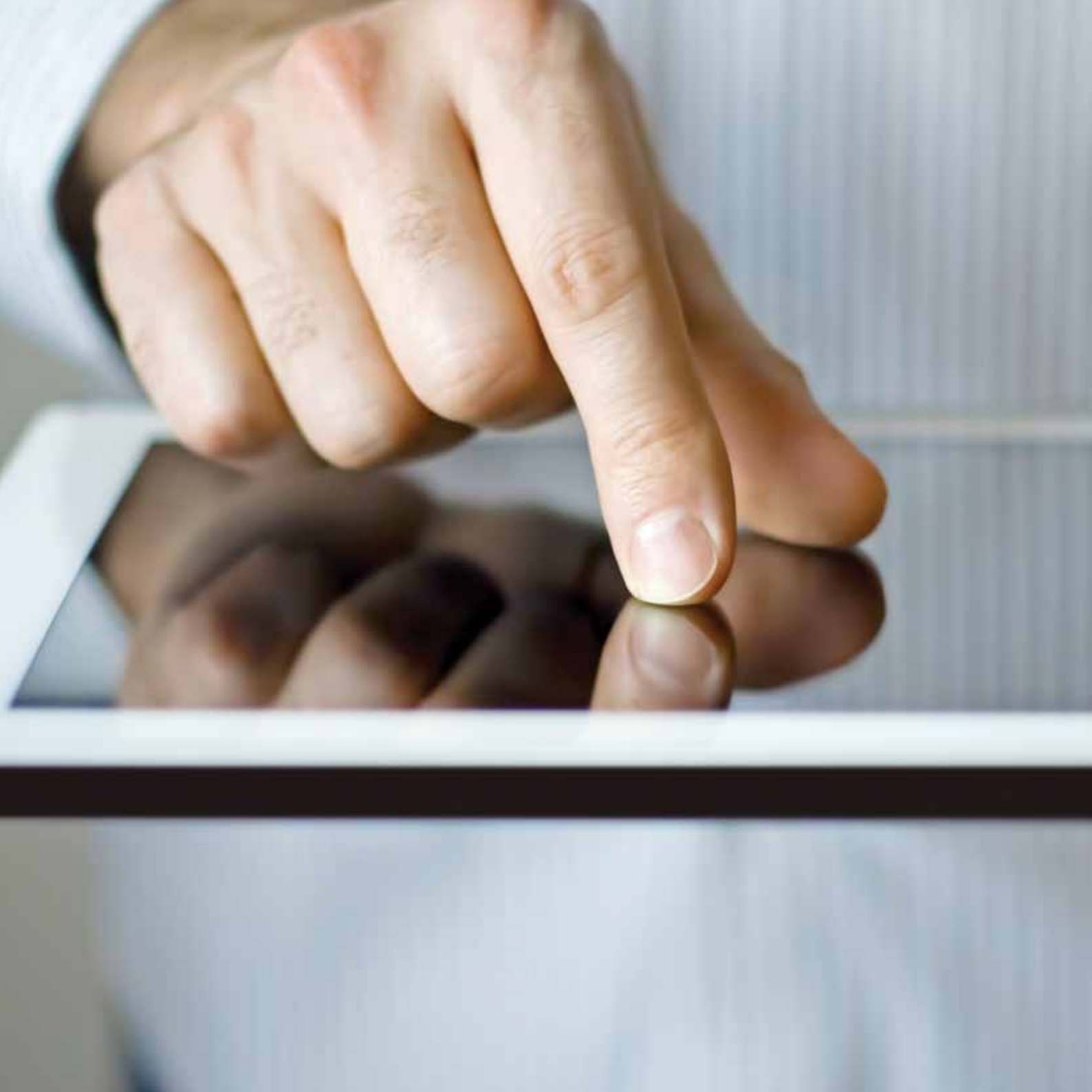
- newspapers have websites with up-to-the-minute information, including videos which look like TV
- broadcasters have websites carrying articles which can look more like a printed page
- TV programmes can be watched as scheduled but also on demand online.

The committee concluded that these changes are profound and that the regulatory framework across the media is creaking.

The committee recommended that:

- the existing pattern of updating the Communications Bill every 10 years or so no longer provides an adequate basis for regulating the industry; the government must draft it to enable flexibility
- new technologies and behaviours are evolving more quickly than regulatory protections, action is required to ensure a safer environment for online content accessed via the internet in order to continue to meet public expectations of content standards
- Ofcom research the standards audiences expect of internet content available through digital intermediaries such as internet service providers (ISPs) and search engines
- the government and Ofcom join up regulation across the media as a whole
- the government review public service broadcasting (PSB) in the round, to include not just the BBC but all other providers, so as to secure its future in the converged world.

The committee also published its report 'Broadband for all – an alternative vision' in 2012-13.



Constitution Committee

The committee examines the constitutional implications of all public bills coming before the House of Lords and reviews the operation of the constitution. Its members include a former Lord Chancellor; a former attorney general, leading lawyers and former ministers.

Accountability of civil servants

Civil servants are non-political staff that carry out the government's work. The government's Civil Service Reform Plan proposes allowing ministers to select departmental permanent secretaries (chief executives) from a shortlist and directly appointing civil servants on fixed-term contracts.

The committee thought this could:

- undermine the neutrality of the civil service
- threaten the principle that jobs are given on merit
- make it harder for civil servants to give honest advice to ministers.

The committee concluded that ministers are responsible for everything their departments and their civil servants do and shouldn't distance themselves from the actions of civil servants or special advisers.

Other reports in 2012-13

- Crime and Courts Bill
- Justice and Security Bill
- Electoral Registration and Administration Bill
- The Agreement on a Referendum on Independence for Scotland
- Police (Complaints and Conduct) Bill
- Defamation Bill
- Growth and Infrastructure Bill
- Succession to the Crown Bill
- Jobseekers (Back to Work Schemes) Bill
- The Pre-emption of Parliament



European Union Committee

The committee considers key EU policies, and examines draft EU laws before they are agreed. It also keeps a check on government action at EU level. The committee appoints a series of subject-specialist sub-committees whose members have, and develop, great expertise in their policy areas.

EU enlargement

The committee highlighted the important role that the EU's enlargement could play in delivering security, stability, and economic prosperity within the EU and in its neighbourhood.

The report also reflected on lessons learned from the most recent enlargements, and how the enlargement process was handled by the Commission, Council and member states. It stressed that future new EU member states must comply fully with the values of the EU, including respect for democracy and human rights.

The committee warned that the European Council and member states cannot afford to ignore the enlargement agenda. The report considered the impact of EU enlargement on both economic growth and the stability and security of the EU's

neighbourhood. The committee also considered the increasing 'nationalisation' of the enlargement process and how the EU and the Commission should tackle bilateral issues, such as the 'name issue' between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Other reports in 2012-13

- MiFID II: Getting it Right for the City and EU Financial Services Industry
- EU Sugar Regime
- Women on Boards
- Subsidiarity Assessment: Fund for the European Aid for the Most Deprived
- European Banking Union
- EU's Global Approach to Migration and Mobility
- Subsidiarity Assessment: Gender Balance on Boards
- EU's External Action Service
- The Fight Against Fraud on the EU's Finances
- EU Police and Criminal Justice Measures: The UK's 2014 Opt-out Decision
- No country is an Energy Island: Securing Investment for the EU's Future
- The Effectiveness of EU Research and Innovation Proposals

Science and Technology Committee

The committee investigates:

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

Building on the Olympic legacy to improve health

The committee's report on sport and exercise science and medicine said that more must be done to make use of exercise-based treatments. It heard compelling evidence from health and sport professionals, medical academics and charities that physical activity can be used as part of treatment for a wide range of chronic diseases. The committee argued that there is a lack of awareness and training for health professionals on the benefits of exercise-based treatments, and that there should be more joined-up thinking across government about the Olympic health legacy.

The committee recommended the following.

- The NHS consider adding physical activity to the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF), which rewards GPs for how well they care for patients.
- NICE and the NHS update chronic disease guidelines with detailed information about exercise, and evaluate the best way to deliver exercise treatments through the NHS.

- The government focus on using sport to improve the nation's health (not just on participation in sport) to deliver 'a consistent approach to health, physical activity and sport'.
- The National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine (NCSEM), set up as part of the Olympic legacy, provide leadership in the sport and exercise science and medicine fields, and put in place a sustainable strategy that will ensure its future beyond the government's one-off £30m capital investment.

The committee also considered the quality of sport and exercise science used to improve elite athletic performance. It argued that approaches are not consistently based on strong biomedical science or informed by the latest scientific developments. For example, there is little evidence that popular techniques such as ice baths to aid recovery offer real performance benefits. It concluded that findings from high quality sports science could help improve elite athlete performance and provide benefits for the public.

The committee also published its reports 'Higher Education in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Subjects' and 'The Implementation of Open Access'.



“Government is failing to act in a consistent way to ensure that the Olympics help us tackle one of our greatest health threats, sedentary lifestyles. We are particularly concerned that the Sports Minister did not accept any responsibility to use sport to improve public health, and so we are not convinced that the Olympic legacy will, as promised, help the nation be “healthier, happier and more active”. The government must take a joined-up approach to sport, physical activity and health to ensure the Olympics deliver a lasting health legacy.”

Lord Krebs (Crossbench), chairman

Building international relationships

The House of Lords has an important role to play in fostering and maintaining relationships with other countries, their parliaments and political leaders.

Members of the Lords act as ambassadors for the House, for Parliament and for the UK. Through their participation in parliamentary visits and cooperation with different multilateral parliamentary organisations, members extend understanding about the House. By engaging with their international counterparts, members are able to share, apply and extend their expertise.



Burmese parliamentarian Ann San Suu Kyi gives a talk to both Houses of Parliament

2012-13 highlights

- Taking part in meetings of Speakers at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, the European Women Speakers meeting at the Austrian parliament and the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments in Nicosia.
- The Lord Speaker's visit to Russia and, with a delegation of women peers and MPs, to Pakistan for talks with speakers.
- The Lord Speaker meeting speakers and presidents of parliaments from Hungary, Thailand, Australia, Kosovo, Albania and Serbia, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the National Assembly of Quebec and presiding over talks in the House of Lords with the speaker of the Shura Council of Saudi Arabia and the President of Malawi, attended by members of both Houses.
- Visits by foreign dignitaries, speakers, members and officials from overseas legislatures, including members of parliament from the Faroe Islands, Botswana, Thailand, Turkey and Burma.
- Members taking part in international meetings of parliamentarians, for example the UN e-parliament Conference in Rome, the World Forum for Democracy in Strasbourg and the Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians for the International Criminal Court and the Rule of Law in Rome.
- Seven members of House of Lords staff taking part in the EU Twinning Project in support of capacity building in the Parliament of Kosovo.

Reaching out

The House of Lords works for the people of the UK and it's vital there is a strong relationship with the public. Members explain the work of the House through a range of formal and informal outreach activities.

Peers in Schools

The Lord Speaker's Peers in Schools programme, where schools can apply to be visited by a member of the House to hear direct explanations of their work and the work of the Lords, continues to grow.

Members including academics, former teachers, scientists, lawyers, former cabinet ministers and civil servants have visited more than 1,000 schools since the programme began in 2007, reaching over 50,000 students.

To arrange a Peers in Schools visit, contact the Lord Speaker's office:

📞 020 7219 6444

@ lordspeaker@parliament.uk

Lords chamber event 2012

Every year the House of Lords chamber is taken over by the public and used for a debating event.

The Big Care Debate

In December 2012, students from schools and colleges across the UK came together with members of the University of the Third Age (U3A) for an intergenerational debate on social care – The Big Care Debate: Who should be responsible for providing support to the vulnerable in our society?

The debate tackled the pressing social, economic and ethical questions that arise out of how we care for the disabled, support children living in care and address the impact of an ageing population.

It was the first chamber event on social care policy, and highlighted how different generations are affected by social policies and the options for improving the environment for those most in need.

The teams were assisted by mentor members of the House of Lords. After a lively debate the participants voted on who they thought should provide support.

The results were:

- The state: 138 votes
- The family: 48 votes
- The third sector: 21 votes



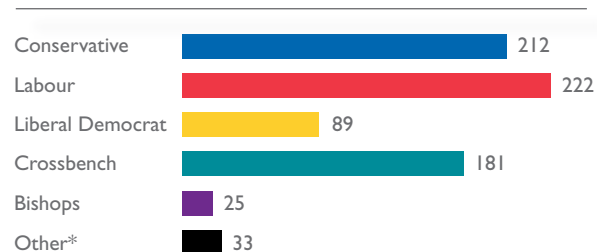
A participant in the 2012 chamber event

Facts and figures

The membership and work of the House of Lords in numbers. Take a closer look at more sessional statistics at parliament.uk/lords.

Members

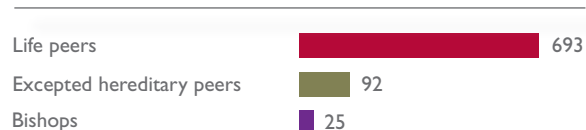
Party strengths



* 16 members from other political parties and 17 non-affiliated members

Note: Figures exclude 37 members on leave of absence, 10 disqualified as senior members of the judiciary and one disqualified as an MEP.

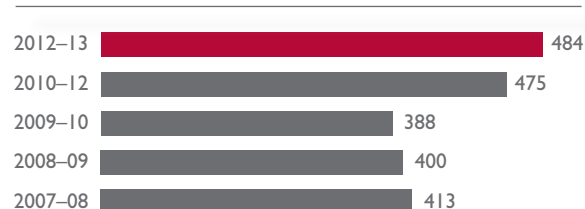
By type



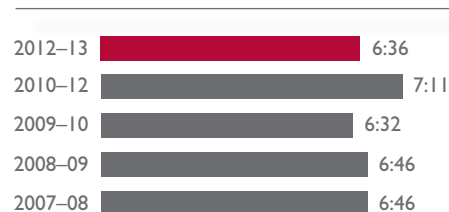
Figures as at 25 April 2013 (end of the 2012-13 session).

Working patterns

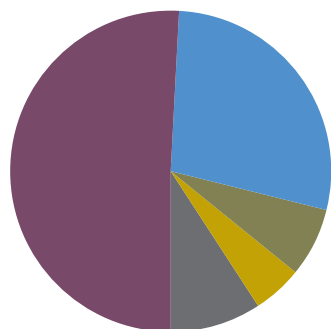
Average daily attendance



Average length of sittings (hours)



How time was spent



Legislation 51%

Debating policy issues 28%

Questioning government 7%

Statements 5%

Other 9%*

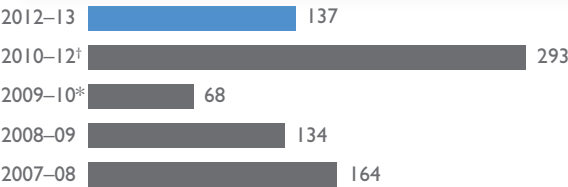
Source: House of Lords sessional statistics 2012-13

* Includes member introductions, daily prayers, adjournments and other formal business

Sitting days

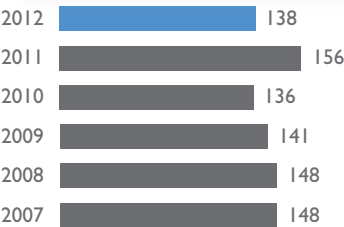
The unit that defines Parliament’s work is a session. Prior to the 2011 Fixed Term Parliaments Act, it varied in length but, whether calculated by session, calendar or financial year, the working year averages around 150 sitting days for both Houses.

By session

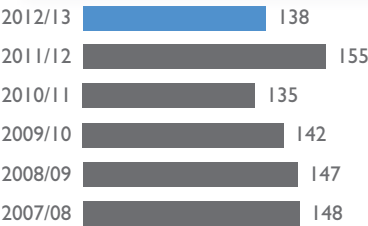


† Long session due to Fixed Term Parliaments Act 2011
* Short session due to General Election

By calendar year



By financial year



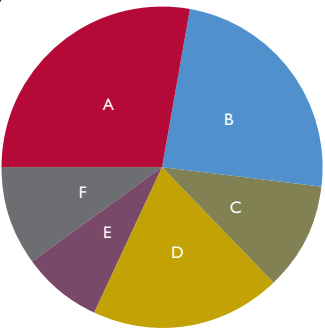
Costs

Expenditure in the 2012/13 financial year

Total costs in 2012/13 amounted to £87.65 million. This includes works expenditure (which covers the House of Lords’ share of all accommodation, maintenance and building costs including the Grade I listed Palace of Westminster).

A Staff costs	28%
B Members’ expenses and financial support	24%
C Security	11%
D Estates and works	19%
E Other expenditure	8%
F Non-cash costs (building depreciation etc.)	10%

Total costs (millions)	£87.65
Cost per taxpayer	£2.92†



† Based on an estimated 30 million income tax payers in 2012/13 (source: HM Revenue & Customs)

Lords online

The 2012-13 parliamentary session saw the continued development of multimedia and online resources to complement the Lords website at parliament.uk/lords

@ukhouseoflords

Launched in September 2011, the House of Lords Twitter feed keeps the public up to date with news from the chamber and committees ensuring the work of the House reaches an active online audience.

Other social media channels

Lords channels on Facebook, Flickr and YouTube complete our online social media presence. Video and news content to promote the core work of the House, including committee work and outreach events, is made available for an online audience to share and engage with.



Follow @ukhouseoflords on Twitter



Like House of Lords on Facebook



Watch House of Lords videos on YouTube



View House of Lords photos on Flickr



Find out more

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

House of Lords Information Office

 020 7219 3107

 hinfo@parliament.uk

 House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW

 parliament.uk/lords

 [@ukhouseoflords](https://twitter.com/ukhouseoflords)

 facebook.com/ukhouseoflords

 youtube.com/ukhouseoflords

 flickr.com/ukhouseoflords

For video and audio coverage go to:
parliamentlive.tv