



Parliamentary Trends: Statistics about Parliament

RESEARCH PAPER 09/69 29 July 2009

This paper provides a summary of statistics about Parliament. It brings together figures about both the House of Commons and Lords; their membership and activities.

The aim is to provide comparisons over time, though periods may vary according to relevance and the availability of consistent data. Some are for parliamentary sessions (a parliamentary session begins each year with the Queen's Speech) some by calendar year and some by financial year. This should be borne in mind when comparing different sets of information.

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Contents

Summary	1
Introduction	2
1 The work of Parliament	3
1.1 Legislation	3
Number of Acts and Statutory Instruments	3
Pages of legislation	6
Sessional Data 1997-98 to 2007-08	7
1.2 Members' Parliamentary Activities	10
Debates	10
Parliamentary Questions	13
Early Day Motions and petitions	15
1.3 Sittings	17
Hours/days	17
Time devoted to different types of business	20
1.4 Petitions	22
2 Members of Parliament	23
2.1 House of Commons	23
Numbers	23
Party	24
Gender	25
Occupation and education	27
Age	28
Ethnicity	29
Honours	30
Discipline	32
Turnover of MPs	33
Change in number of MPs by party	34
2.2 House of Lords	35
Numbers	35
Party	37
Peerage type	38

	Gender	39
	Ethnicity	41
	Peerage creations	41
	Government defeats in the House of Lords	43
	Attendance	47
	Sitting days and hours	48
3	Committees	49
	Members on Select Committees	49
4	Cost of Parliament	51
	4.1 Spending	51
	4.2 MPs' and Peers' pay and allowances	53
	Members' salaries	53
	Members' allowances	54
	Ministerial salaries	58
	Overall Members' cost	60
	Peers' allowances	61
	4.3 Members' staff	61
	4.4 Parliamentary staff	62
5	Parliament communicating with the public	64
	5.1 Internet	64
	5.2 Television	65
	5.3 Education and Visits	65
6	International comparisons	67
	6.1 Structure (bicameral/unitary)	67
	6.2 Size	67
	6.3 Gender	69
	6.4 Pay/costs	71
	6.5 Sitting hours	73

Tables

Table 1: Acts and Statutory Instruments, 1950 to 2009	5
Table 2: Pages of Acts and Statutory Instruments, 1911 to 2006	7
Table 3: Public Bills, 1997-98 to 2007-08	8
Table 4: Private Bills, 1997-98 to 2007-08	9
Table 5: Statutory Instruments laid by Session, 1997-98 to 2007-08	10
Table 6: Number of divisions by Session, 1945-46 to 2007-08	12
Table 7: House of Commons Parliamentary Questions, 1990-91 to 2007-08	13
Table 8: House of Commons Parliamentary Questions per sitting day, 1990-91 to 2007-08	14
Table 9: Written parliamentary questions answered by department, 2007-08	14
Table 10: Written Parliamentary questions tabled by Financial Year, 2001/02 to 2007/08	15
Table 11: Number of Early Day Motions presented, 1939-40 to 200-07	16
Table 12: Number of sitting days per Session, 1944-45 to 2007-08	18
Table 13: Sittings in Westminster Hall, 1999-2000 to 2007-08	19
Table 14: Distribution of time spent on Government bills (hours)	21
Table 15: Petitions presented to Parliament at various dates since 1785	22
Table 16: Number of Westminster MPs by country since 1832	23
Table 17: Seats won by party at General Elections, 1918 to 2005	25
Table 18: Female MPs after General Elections, 1979 to 2005	26
Table 19: Women MPs by party after General Elections	27
Table 20: Education of Members elected in 2005 (3 main parties)	27
Table 21: MPs' occupations 1987 to 2005	28
Table 22: Occupation of MPs elected at the 2005 General Election	28
Table 23: Age of MPs elected at general elections since 1987	29
Table 24: Age by party of MPs elected at the 2005 General Election	29
Table 25: Knighthoods conferred on MPs by calendar year	31
Table 26: Number of suspensions by Session, 1949-50 to 2008-09	33
Table 27: Entrants and leavers at general elections 1979 to 2005	34
Table 28: Change in number of MPs by party at general elections, 1886 to 2005	34
Table 29: Total membership of the House of Lords by Session, 1968-69 to 2007-08	35
Table 30: Peers by party and Session, 1991-92 to 2007-08	39
Table 31: Peers by peerage type and Session, 1968-69 to 2007-08	40
Table 32: Peers by gender and Session, 1981-82 to 2007-08	40

Table 33: Peerages created by Prime Minister and by type of peerage, 1880 to 2008	43
Table 34: Government defeats in the House of Lords by Session, 1975-76 to 2007-08	45
Table 35: Number of instances per Parliament where the House of Lords has insisted on its amendments to a bill, 1974-2008	46
Table 36: House of Lords sitting days and hours by Session, 1968-69 to 2007-08	48
Table 37: Select Committee statistics by Session, 1979-80 to 2007-08	50
Table 38: Expenditure by both Houses of Parliament by Financial Year, 1990/91 to 2007/08	51
Table 39: Annual salaries of Members since 1911	53
Table 40: Additional Costs Allowance- maximum rate 1972 to 2009	55
Table 41: Maximum Office Costs Allowance 1969 to 2002	57
Table 42: Staffing Allowance since June 2001	58
Table 43: Salary entitlement for Ministers, 1965 to 2009	59
Table 44: House of Commons – Members’ Expenditure, 1990/91 to 2007/08	60
Table 45: Main Peers’ allowances, current summary 2005-2010	61
Table 46: Number of Members and their Staff, 1997/98-2007/08	62
Table 47: Number of people working in Parliament, 1997/98-2007/08	62
Table 48: Parliamentary staff costs – Commons and Lords, 1992/93-2007/08	63
Table 49: Visitor numbers: Police statistics for all entrances since 2006	66
Table 50: Population per lower/single chamber Member in thousands	69
Table 51: Number of women Members of Parliament in 1997 and 2008	71
Table 52: Comparison of salaries and Members of Parliament in selected countries	72
Table 53: International comparisons of sitting days and hours	75

Key facts

- There are 646 Members of Parliament (MPs) currently elected to the House of Commons. This will increase to 650 at the next general election.
- Women account for one in five of all MPs, roughly four times higher than in the 1970s. The UK is 59th overall in the world in terms of female representation in Parliament.
- The state of the parties in the House of Commons in terms of seats won after the 2005 General Election was as follows: Labour 355, Conservatives 198, and Liberal Democrats 62. Plaid Cymru and the Scottish National Party had nine seats between them, and 22 seats were held by other parties.
- The current salary of an MP is £64,766 per annum. Additional salaries are available to Members who have extra roles, such as government minister and the Speaker.
- At the end of the 2007-08 Session, the House of Lords had 744 members. Of these, 144 were women. Despite the abolition of most hereditary peers from the Lords, the UK Parliament's upper chamber is still the largest in Europe. It is more than twice the size of its nearest rival in terms of number, the Senate in France.
- The state of the parties in the House of Lords at the end of the 2007-08 Session was as follows; 199 Conservatives, 214 Labour, 74 Liberal Democrat, 206 Cross-benchers and 40 were of another description.

Introduction

Statistics and data about the workings of Parliament, its Members and its staff have existed for a long time. These are usually found in the form of sessional reports (such as the *House of Commons Sessional Returns*), or for financial matters, in documents such as the *Resource Accounts*. Outside Parliament, scholarly work has also been conducted, mainly focusing on electoral matters but also in some cases providing statistics on other topics such as revolts, committees and ministries.

Parliamentary Trends is designed to bring together existing statistical information about different aspects of Parliament into a single document. The data used to produce this paper comes from existing parliamentary publications and external sources.

This paper is divided into a number of sections, which look at the statistical trends for different aspects of Parliament. The main sections are the work of Parliament, Members of Parliament (including Lords), committees, the cost of Parliament, communication with the public and some international comparisons.

As a first edition of a new paper, the authors welcome comments and suggestions about future issues. Contact details are on the inside front cover.

1 The work of Parliament

1.1 Legislation

Number of Acts and Statutory Instruments

A primary role of any legislature is to scrutinise and pass legislation. In the United Kingdom there are two main forms of legislation: primary and delegated (secondary) legislation. Primary legislation (called Acts of Parliament, or statutes) is generally debated by both Houses of Parliament and is often (though not necessarily) long and complex. Sometimes, however, it is necessary to change the law quickly or regularly, for example to change the amount of the state pension to take account of inflation,¹ or to make detailed regulations. An Act may give a government minister the power to pass delegated legislation to make changes like these without passing another piece of primary legislation. The most common form of delegated legislation (sometimes also called 'subordinate legislation' or 'secondary legislation') is the Statutory Instrument. The parliamentary procedure for Statutory Instruments varies, but is usually much quicker than the procedure for passing an Act.

While the number of Acts passed per calendar year has if anything been declining over the last 30 to 40 years, the number of Statutory Instruments (many of which are not considered by or laid before Parliament) has been increasing and the number of pages of legislation for both categories has been higher in recent years compared with 30 or 40 years ago. There may be several reasons for the growth in the number of Statutory Instruments. Certainly, since Britain joined the then Common Market, the amount of legislation originating in Europe has increased as European Union law is often introduced as secondary legislation.² For more information on delegated legislation, see the Parliament website's information page.³

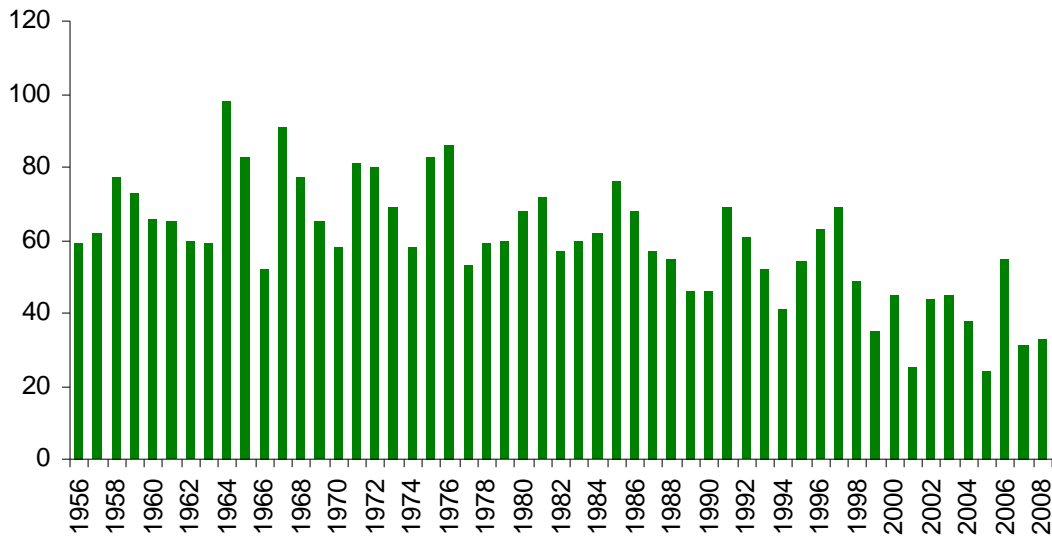
The following charts show the number of Public Acts which have received Royal Assent and Statutory Instruments which have been made by UK Government departments, the National Assembly for Wales (since 1999) and registered by the Statutory Instruments Registrar. For consistency it also includes Scottish Statutory Instruments made by the Scottish Administration since 1999 and registered by the Scottish Statutory Instruments Registrar.

¹ A recent example of this particular type of Statutory Instrument is [The Social Security Benefits Up-rating Order 2008](#)

² For information about the relationship between EU and national legislation, see the Library Standard Note [EU legislation](#)

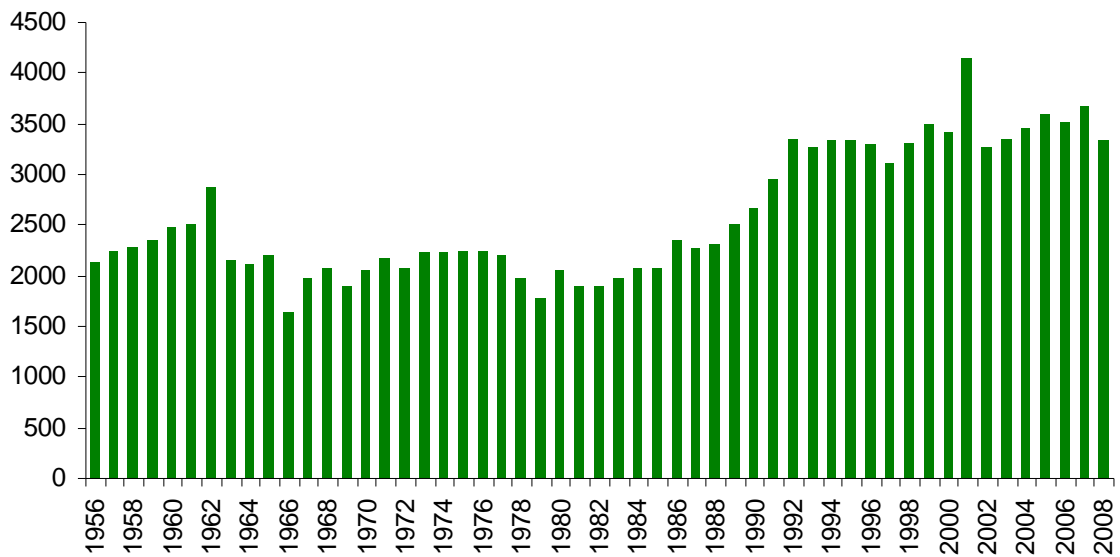
³ <http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/laws/delegated.cfm>

Acts Passed 1950 to 2008



The number of Acts passed has declined somewhat over the last 30-40 years, while the number of Statutory Instruments has seen a sharp increase, from around 2,000 a year in the first half of the 1980s to around double that now.

Statutory Instruments Registered 1950-2008



Data underpinning these charts are in the table overleaf.

Table 1: Acts and Statutory Instruments, 1950 to 2009

	Acts	Statutory Instruments	
1950	50	2,144	
1951	64	2,335	
1952	64	2,312	
1953	56	1,937	
1954	66	1,764	
1955	49	2,007	
1956	59	2,122	
1957	62	2,250	
1958	77	2,280	
1959	73	2,342	
1960	66	2,495	
1961	65	2,514	
1962	60	2,877	
1963	59	2,157	
1964	98	2,102	
1965	83	2,201	
1966	52	1,641	
1967	91	1,976	
1968	77	2,079	
1969	65	1,902	
1970	58	2,044	
1971	81	2,178	
1972	80	2,077	
1973	69	2,236	
1974	58	2,227	
1975	83	2,251	
1976	86	2,248	
1977	53	2,202	
1978	59	1,977	
1979	60	1,770	
1980	68	2,051	
1981	72	1,892	
1982	57	1,900	
1983	60	1,965	
1984	62	2,072	
1985	76	2,080	
1986	68	2,344	
1987	57	2,278	
1988	55	2,311	
1989	46	2,503	
1990	46	2,667	
1991	69	2,953	
1992	61	3,359	
1993	52	3,276	
1994	41	3,334	
1995	54	3,345	
1996	63	3,291	
1997	69	3,114	
1998	49	3,319	
1999	35	3,488	Scottish SIs 204
2000	45	3,424	454
2001	25	4,147	494
2002	44	3,271	570
2003	45	3,354	623
2004	38	3,452	565
2005	24	3,599	663
2006	55	3,509	616
2007	31	3,662	584
2008	33	3,327	441
2009	5*	1,503*	244*

* Figures for 2009 to 22 June

Excludes Northern Ireland Acts and statutory rules

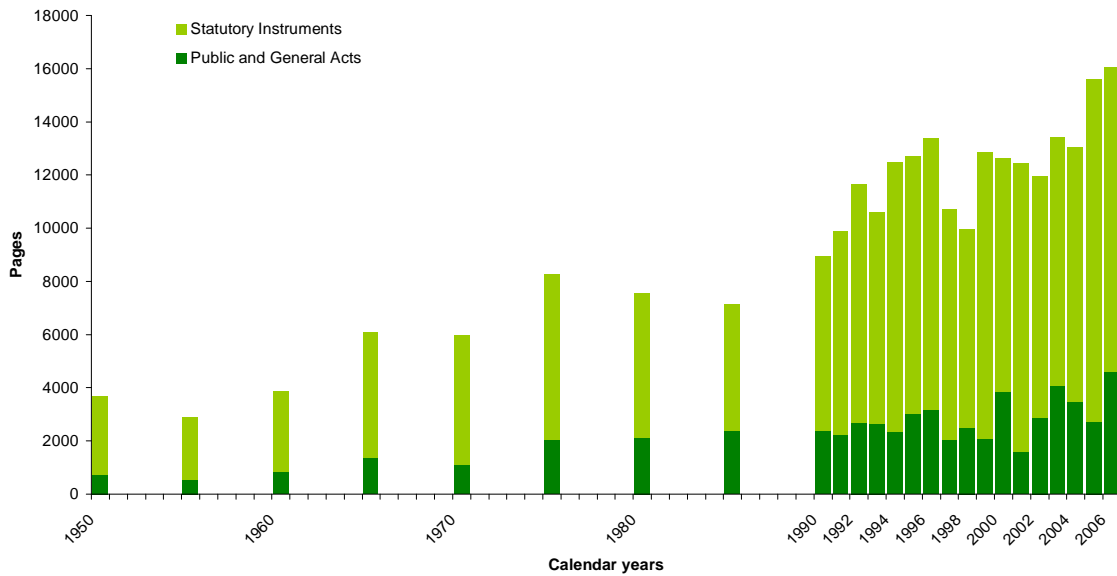
2003 includes under "Consolidation Acts" one Act under the Tax Law re-write

Source: House of Commons Library and Office of Public Sector Information

Pages of legislation

An alternative measure of the volume of legislation passed by Parliament is the number of pages of legislation. The following chart shows the number of pages of Acts and Statutory Instruments in the published Stationery Office volumes for selected calendar years.

Pages of Acts and Statutory Instruments 1950 - 2006 (selected years)



While the number of Acts has been declining over the last four decades, the length of each Act has tended to increase to the extent that the overall number of pages of Acts passed remains relatively high. Statutory Instruments have grown in number and in terms of the total number of pages.

The data underpinning the chart are in the following table.

Table 2: Pages of Acts and Statutory Instruments, 1911 to 2006

Session	Public and General Acts	Statutory Instruments	Total
1911	430	330	760
1921	220	1,080	1,300
1931	280	1,050	1,330
1940	370	1,970	2,340
1950	720	2,970	3,690
1955	540	2,340	2,880
1960	850	3,020	3,870
1965	1,340	4,730	6,070
1970	1,110	4,880	5,990
1975	2,060	6,210	8,270
1980	2,110	5,440	7,550
1985	2,380	4,760	7,140
1990	2,390	6,550	8,940
1991	2,250	7,630	9,880
1992	2,700	8,960	11,660
1993	2,640	7,940	10,580
1994	2,340	10,140	12,480
1995	3,000	9,690	12,690
1996	3,150	10,230	13,380
1997	2,060	8,660	10,720
1998	2,490	7,480	9,970
1999	2,096	10,760	12,856
2000	3,865	8,770	12,635
2001	1,605	10,830	12,435
2002	2,868	9,070	11,938
2003	4,073	9,334	13,407
2004	3,470	9,552	13,022
2005	2,712	12,874	15,586
2006	4,609	11,422	16,031

Notes: The figures for Statutory Instruments relate to the Number of pages in the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) bound set, excluding some local and unpublished Instruments and, more recently, those of the National Assembly for Wales. The figures do not include Northern Ireland (Stormont) Acts or Statutory Rules. Pre-1987 instruments are adjusted to equate to current page sizes.

Sessional Data 1997-98 to 2007-08

Bills & Acts

Bills fall into two main types: Government Bills and Private Members' (back-bench) Bills. Almost all Government Bills are debated and subsequently become law (having passed through both the House of Commons and Lords); generally these receive Royal Assent in the same Session in which they are introduced, but in some cases Bills are carried over to the next Session. Bills not receiving Royal Assent or carried over, including Government Bills, may be "lost" at the end of a Session. Many Private Members' Bills are simply introduced, and are not discussed at all. Of those that are allocated time for debate, relatively few are passed. In the 2006-07 Session, for example, there were 34 Government Bills; 30 of these became law, one⁴ was unsuccessful and three were carried over to the next Session. Of the

⁴ *Fraud (Trials without a Jury) Bill*, Bill 6 of 2006-07

94 Private Members' Bills that either started in the House of Commons or were brought to the Commons from the House of Lords, three became law.

Table 3: Public Bills, 1997-98 to 2007-08

Session	Introduced to Commons or introduced to Lords and sent to Commons					
	Government Bills			Private Members' Bills		
	Commons	Lords	Total	Commons	Lords	Total
1997-98	35	18	53	135	14	149
1998-99	22	9	31	93	11	104
1999-00	28	12	40	97	7	104
2000-01	19	7	26	61	2	63
2001-02	26	13	39	118	5	123
2002-03	26	10	36	93	9	102
2003-04	25	11	36	89	0	89
2004-05	25	7	32	69	2	71
2005-06	42	16	58	112	9	121
2006-07	24	10	34	88	9	97
2007-08	24	8	32	100	6	106

Session	Royal Assent received					
	Government Bills			Private Members' Bills		
	Commons	Lords	Total	Commons	Lords	Total
1997-98	34	18	52	8	2	10
1998-99	18	9	27	7	1	8
1999-00	27	12	39	5	1	6
2000-01	14	7	21	0	0	0
2001-02	26	13	39	7	1	8
2002-03	23	10	33	13	0	13
2003-04	22	11	33	5	0	5
2004-05	14	7	21	0	0	0
2005-06	37	16	53	3	0	3
2006-07	20	10	30	3	0	3
2007-08	22	8	30	3	0	3

Source: House of Commons Sessional Returns

Private Bills are a separate category of legislation which confer upon individuals or corporate bodies powers in excess of the general law.⁵ Private Bills do not have to be passed in the same Parliamentary Session they are introduced. The number of Private Bills introduced (including suspended and revived) into the House of Commons or brought from the House of Lords, and the number becoming law, is as follows:

⁵ Current Private Bills are listed on [Parliament's website](#)

Table 4: Private Bills, 1997-98 to 2007-08

Session	Private Bills introduced ^a	Private Bills receiving Royal Assent
1997-98	17	9
1998-99	9	4
1999-00	12	7
2000-01	7	5
2001-02	9	7
2002-03	7	5
2003-04	6	6
2004-05	6	0
2005-06	5	4
2006-07	6	3
2007-08	12	3

(a) introduced into the House of Commons or brought from the House of Lords; includes suspended or revived Bills (those carried from one Parliamentary Session to the next).

Source: House of Commons Sessional Returns

Delegated legislation – Statutory Instruments

The form of parliamentary involvement in delegated legislation, most of which is carried out using Statutory Instruments (SIs), is determined by the terms of the ‘parent’ Act of Parliament under which Ministers are exercising their powers. A substantial proportion of delegated legislation (for example, local instruments which have only to be published to become law) receives no parliamentary scrutiny. Many SIs are laid before Parliament and all of these are subject to the scrutiny of the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments to determine whether they are within the powers given to Ministers under the parent Act and whether they are properly drafted. Most SIs are, in practice, not subsequently debated and, of those that are, the majority are discussed not on the floor of the House of Commons but in a Standing Committee⁶, after which they are reported to the House and voted on without any further debate.

⁶ Generally the Delegated Legislation Standing Committee, but can be the Scottish or NI Grand Committee

Table 5: Statutory Instruments laid by Session, 1997-98 to 2007-08

Session	Laid before House	Considered in House	Considered in Committee
1997-98	1,856	34	215
1998-99	1,479	22	178
1999-00	1,456	21	175
2000-01	868	15	122
2001-02	1,788	15	258
2002-03	1,451	13	244
2003-04	1,281	9	187
2004-05	806	6	118
2005-06	1,885	19	273
2006-07	1,380	12	202
2007-08	1,319	17	212

Source: *House of Commons Sessional Returns*

1.2 Members' Parliamentary Activities

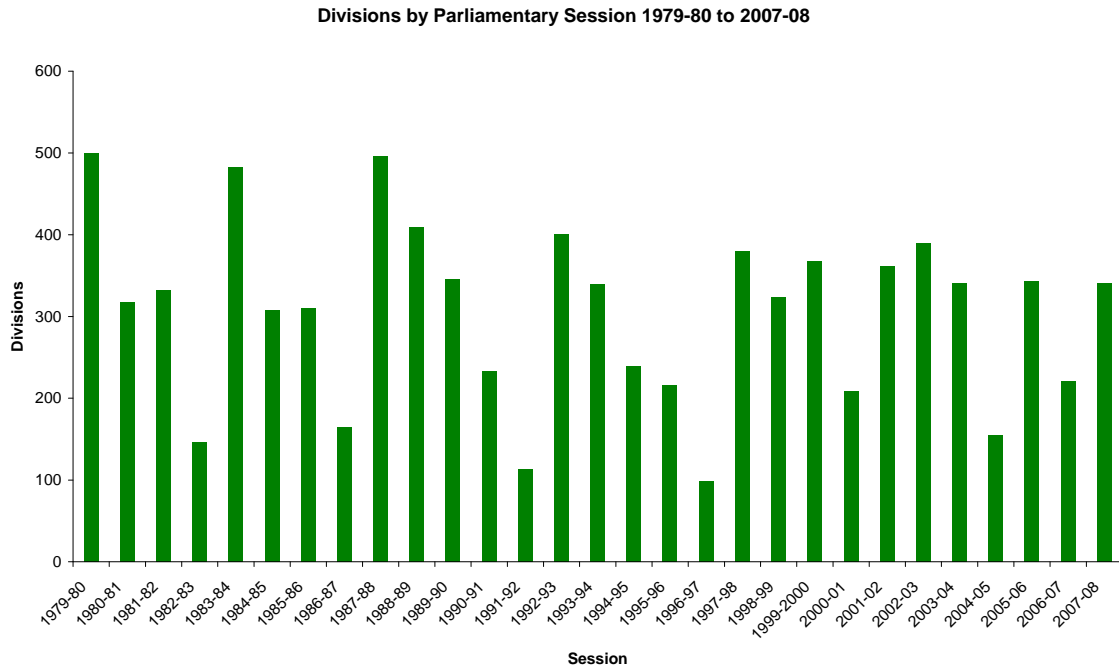
Debates

Divisions

A division is a vote by Members of the House of Commons or the House of Lords. Figures for the number of divisions in the Commons per session since 1945 show that the Commons divided relatively often during the 1945-51 Government led by Clement Attlee. The 1948 Session was extremely short, as it was a special "short session" introduced by the Government, in view of the Lords' obstruction of the Bill in the previous Session (1947-48).⁷ The number of divisions declined slightly in the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s. After Harold Wilson's second General Election victory in 1966, the number of divisions increased markedly and that level was maintained until the 1992 General Election. Since 1992 there has been a slight decrease in the number of divisions. The parliaments of 1987 (which lasted 5 years), 1975 (4 years) and 1945 (5 years) are the top three in terms of total divisions held.

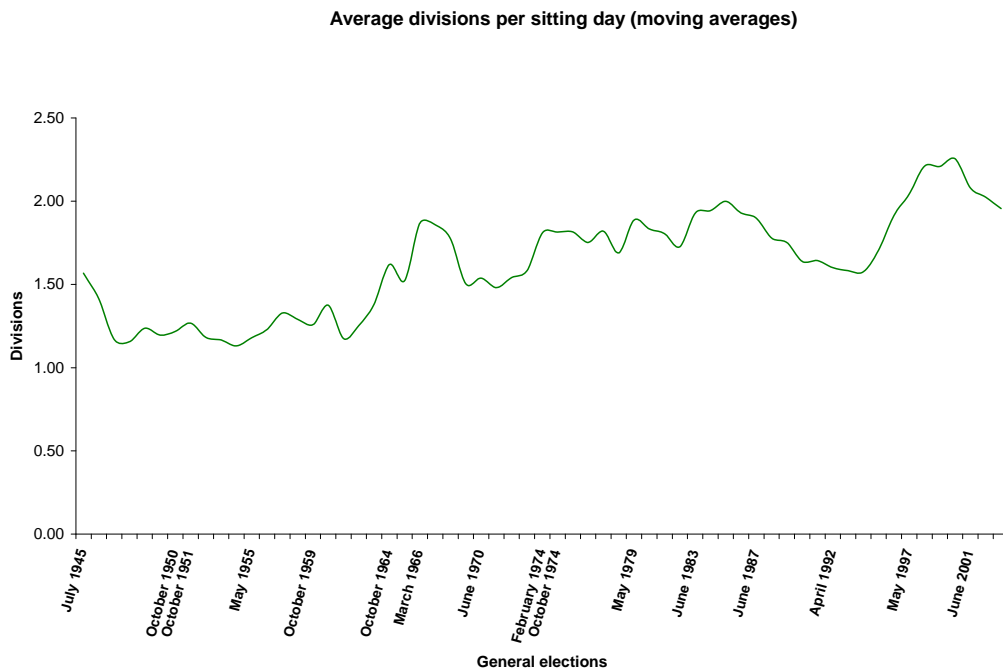
Source: *Sessional Information Digest, Hansard*

⁷ SN/PC/675, *The Parliament Acts*



Source: *Sessional Information Digest, Hansard*

An analysis of the number of divisions per sitting day in the House of Commons shows that the frequency of divisions has tended to increase since the Second World War, but that this trend may have been reversed in the last few years.



The data on which these charts are based is shown in the table overleaf:

Table 6: Number of divisions by Session, 1945-46 to 2007-08

Session	Number of divisions	Session	Number of divisions
1945-46	294	1976-77	234
1946-47	383	1977-78	324
1947-48	278	1978-79	110
1948	10	1979-80	500
1948-49	310	1980-81	317
1950	65	1981-82	332
1950-51	170	1982-83	146
1951-52	245	1983-84	482
1952-53	227	1984-85	307
1953-54	241	1985-86	310
1954-55	61	1986-87	165
1955-56	298	1987-88	496
1956-57	180	1988-89	409
1957-58	206	1989-90	345
1958-59	177	1990-91	233
1959-60	156	1991-92	113
1960-61	269	1992-93	401
1961-62	261	1993-94	339
1962-63	183	1994-95	239
1963-64	148	1995-96	216
1964-65	276	1996-97	99
1965-66	39	1997-98	380
1966-67	496	1998-99	323
1967-68	312	1999-00	367
1968-69	352	2000-01	209
1969-70	132	2001-02	361
1970-71	480	2002-03	390
1971-72	352	2003-04	340
1972-73	224	2004-05	155
1973-74	47	2005-06	343
1974	109	2006-07	221
1974-75	405	2007-08	341
1975-76	432		

Source: *Sessional Information Digest, Hansard*

Parliamentary Questions

Numbers answered by Session

MPs can ask questions to Government Ministers by “tabling” Parliamentary questions (PQs). These may be asked for oral or written reply. The number of oral PQs is stable, since the time set aside for answering of oral PQs has not significantly changed. The number of written questions has increased.

The number of written PQs per sitting day in the 2007-08 Session at 445 was the second highest of the previous ten sessions. Short sessions are indicated with an asterisk – these are sessions where Parliament was dissolved and a General Election was held. Short sessions are usually followed by long sessions, running from May or June of the General Election year through to the October or November of the following year. Statistics are derived from the Parliamentary Information Management Service (PIMS) and the Sessional Returns published by the House:

Table 7: House of Commons Parliamentary Questions, 1990-91 to 2007-08

Session	Oral	Written	Urgent	Private Notice
1990-91	2,348	32,843	...	...
1991-92*	1,156	16,050	...	...
1992-93	3,141	56,550	...	...
1993-94	2,127	41,051	...	...
1994-95	2,416	44,994	...	...
1995-96	2,127	35,843	...	...
1996-97*	1,169	18,439	...	...
1997-98	3,382	52,652	...	28
1998-99	1,943	32,149	...	12
1999-00	2,106	36,781	...	9
2000-01*	906	16,716	...	7
2001-02	2,203	72,905	...	10
2002-03	2,206	55,436	10	...
2003-04	2,060	54,875	12	...
2004-05*	848	22,292	4	...
2005-06	2,712	95,041	14	...
2006-07	1,775	57,825	9	...
2007-08	2,645	73,357	4	...

Oral - total number of Oral questions reached for answer

Written - total for written answer on named day or for ordinary written answer

Source: House of Commons Sessional Returns

Table 8: House of Commons Parliamentary Questions, 1990-91 to 2007-08 (per sitting day)

Session	Sitting days	Written questions answered per sitting day	Days on which oral questions answered	Oral questions answered per day
1990-91	160	205	125	19
1991-92*	83	193	63	18
1992-93	240	236	182	17
1993-94	154	267	108	20
1994-95	159	283	129	19
1995-96	146	246	122	17
1996-97*	86	214	71	16
1997-98	241	218	198	17
1998-99	149	216	126	15
1999-00	170	216	144	15
2000-01*	83	201	69	13
2001-02	201	363	162	14
2002-03	162	342	230	10
2003-04	157	350	143	14
2004-05*	65	343	58	15
2005-06	208	457	188	14
2006-07	146	396	129	14
2007-08	165	445	149	18

Oral - total number of Oral questions reached for answer

Written - total for written answer on named day or for ordinary written answer

Source: House of Commons *Sessional Returns*

Departments in the public eye tend to be asked a relatively high number of PQs. The Government departments which answered the most written questions in the 2007-08 Session are listed below. The Department of Health has answered the highest number of written PQs in five out of the last seven sessions, often by a significant margin. The Home Office also regularly appears to have a high WPQ 'load'.

Table 9: Written parliamentary questions answered by department, 2007-08

Department	WPQs
Health	8,936
Home Office	6,389
Communities and Local Government	5,498
Treasury	5,059
Defence	4,663

Source: PIMS

Numbers by Financial Year

The House of Commons Commission also publishes information on the number of questions by Financial Year. The report for 2005/06 noted "the first year of this new Parliament saw an unprecedented increase in the number of questions tabled for written answer." The report shows that the average number of questions dealt with the by Table Office per day had increased from 460 in financial year 2001/02, to 596 in 2005/06. The numbers do not

correspond exactly with the number of questions tabled, as some questions dealt with go on to be formally 'tabled'. The proportion of questions which were e-tabled increased from 15 per cent in 2003/04 to 30 per cent in 2005/06.⁸ A further increase to 38 per cent took place in 2007/08

Table 10: Written Parliamentary questions tabled by Financial Year, 2001/02 to 2007/08

Questions, answers and motions	Financial year						
	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Average number of questions dealt with by the Table Office per sitting day	460	463	472	456	596	605	591
Number of Members who have used e-tableting facility ^a	...	45	102	153	300	334	268
Percentage of questions e-tabled	...	6%	5%	21%	30%	36%	38%
Total number of written answers published	42,088	51,978	50,032	49,562	61,477	63,451	63,641

^ae-tableting introduced on 01.01.2003 - questions tabled by email

Source: House of Commons Commission, *Annual report*

In June 2007 the 2006/07 Annual Report of the House of Commons Commission noted as follows:

76. After the unprecedented rise in the numbers of parliamentary questions and EDMs [Early Day motions] reported in last year's report (see paragraphs 76 and 77), both remained at historically high levels in 2006/07. More than 74,600 written and 6,340 oral questions were tabled. This represented a marked increase, of 20 per cent, of the number of written questions tabled compared to the previous financial year, which was partially offset by a reduction in the number of questions tabled for oral answer...⁹

The 2006/07 figure of PQs was maintained in the 2007/08 Financial Year.

Early Day Motions and petitions

Early Day Motions, or EDMs, are motions put before Parliament for debate at an 'early day'. In practice, the early day rarely comes, so EDMs are not usually debated.

While many EDMs are not debated, they are seen as a way of publicly registering an opinion by Members. As the chart below shows, the number of EDMs has grown over the years.¹⁰

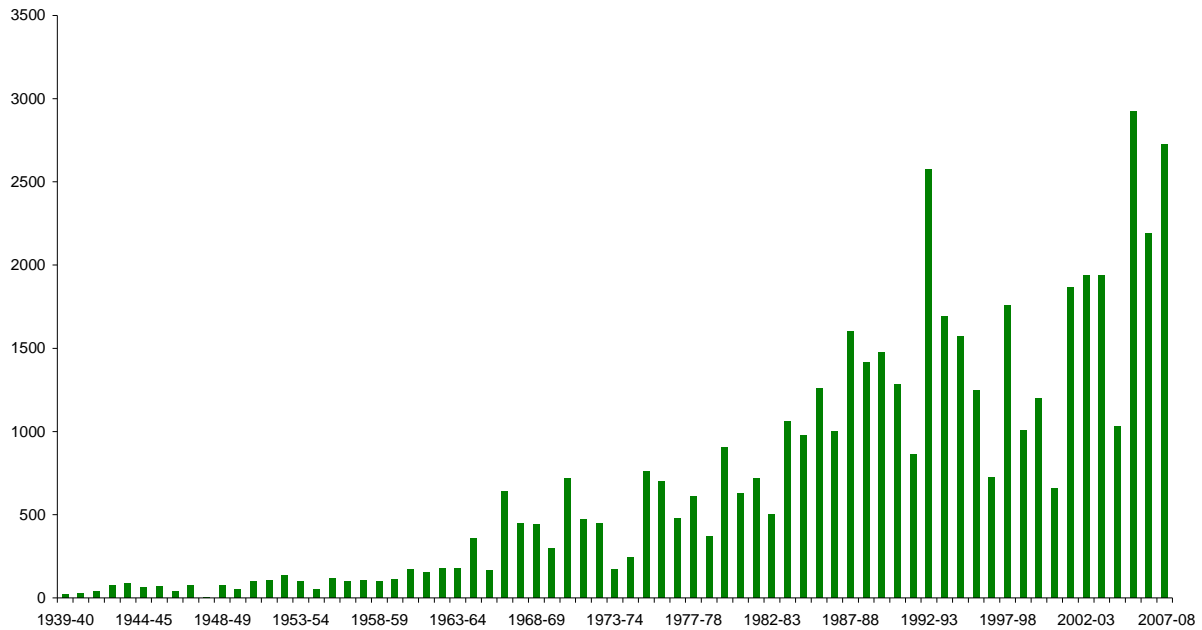
⁸ Annex 1 Data Table Providing Advice and Services to the House and its Committees Commission Annual Report 2005-6

⁹ House of Commons, *Twenty-ninth report of the House of Commons Commission - Financial Year 2006/07*, June 2007, HC 708, paras 75-76,

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmcomm/708/708.pdf>

¹⁰ For more information on EDMs, go to House of Commons Factsheet P3, [Early Day Motions](#)

EDMs per session, 1939-40 to 2007-08



Source: Sessional returns

The data underlying this chart are shown in the following table:

Table 11: Number of Early Day Motions presented, 1939-40 to 2007-08

Session	EDMs	Session	EDMs	Session	EDMs
1939-40	21	1962-63	176	1985-86	1,261
1940-41	30	1963-64	180	1986-87	(a) 999
1941-42	41	1964-65	356	1987-88	(b) 1,600
1942-43	77	1965-66	(a) 164	1988-89	1,414
1943-44	88	1966-67	(b) 640	1989-90	1,478
1944-45	64	1967-68	446	1990-91	1,283
1945-46	71	1968-69	443	1991-92	(a) 860
1946-47	37	1969-70	(a) 300	1992-93	(b) 2,574
1947-48	79	1970-71	(b) 717	1993-94	1,691
1948	(c) 3	1971-72	474	1994-95	1,575
1948-49	77	1972-73	448	1995-96	1,246
1949-50	55	1973-74	(a) 174	1996-97	(a) 724
1950-51	97	1974	(b) 245	1997-98	(b) 1,757
1951-52	106	1974-75	759	1998-99	1,009
1952-53	135	1975-76	701	1999-00	1,198
1953-54	102	1976-77	475	2000-01	(a) 659
1954-55	52	1977-78	611	2001-02	(b) 1,864
1955-56	116	1978-79	(a) 368	2002-03	1,939
1956-57	96	1979-80	(b) 907	2003-04	1,941
1957-58	105	1980-81	631	2004-05	(a) 1,033
1958-59	99	1981-82	716	2005-06	(b) 2,924
1959-60	111	1982-83	(a) 502	2006-07	2,193
1960-61	169	1983-84	(b) 1,058	2007-08	2,727
1961-62	154	1984-85	979		

Source: Sessional Returns

(a) short session

(b) long session

(c) very short session

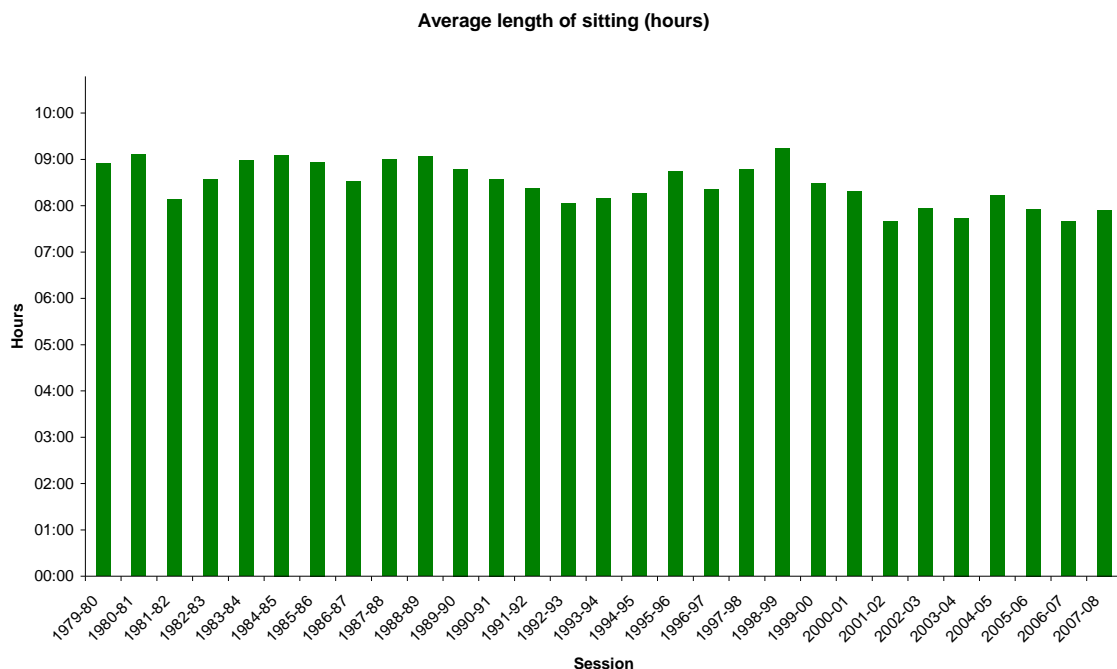
1.3 Sittings

Hours/days

House of Commons Chamber

The chart below shows the average length of sitting in the House of Commons Chamber per parliamentary session from 1979-80 to 2007-08. In 1992 the *Jopling Report* recommended changes to sitting hours to reduce the number of late sittings, among other things,¹¹ and the House began experimenting with new arrangements from the 1994-95 Session onwards.

As the chart shows, the effect that the reforms had on sitting hours was to increase the average length of sittings. It was not until the recommendations of the Modernisation Committee were put into practice from 1998 onwards that the hours that the Commons sat each day began to decline.¹²



The following table shows the data used to create the chart, together with the number of sitting days per parliamentary session since 1944-45:

¹¹ The Select Committee on Sittings of the House (Jopling Committee), *Report*, 18 February 1992, HC 20 1991/92

¹² Modernisation Committee, *The Parliamentary Calendar: Initial Proposals*, 7 December 1998, HC 60 1998-99. For further information on sitting hours, see House of Commons Research Paper 02/41, *Modernisation of the House of Commons: Sitting hours* and Standard Note SNPC 2854, *Modernisation: Sitting Hours*

Table 12: Number of sitting days per Session, 1944-45 to 2007-08

Session	Number of Sitting Days	Session	Number of Sitting Days	Average length of sitting (hrs:mins)
1944-45	95			
1945-46	212	1975-76	191	
1946-47	164	1976-77	149	
1947-48	171	1977-78	169	
1948 ¹	10	1978-79	86	
1948-49	208	1980-81	163	09:07
1950 ²	105	1981-82	174	08:08
1950-51	153	1982-83	115	08:34
1951-52	157	1983-84	213	08:59
1952-53	162	1984-85	172	09:06
1953-54	187	1985-86	172	08:57
1954-55	84	1986-87	109	08:32
1955-56	219	1987-88	218	09:00
1956-57	159	1988-89	175	09:04
1957-58	156	1989-90	167	08:48
1958-59	159	1990-91	160	08:35
1959-60	160	1991-92	83	08:23
1960-61	168	1992-93	240	08:03
1961-62	160	1993-94	154	08:10
1962-63	162	1994-95	159	08:16
1963-64	155	1995-96	146	08:45
1964-65	177	1996-97	86	08:21
1965-66	65	1997-98	241	08:47
1966-67	246	1998-99	149	09:15
1967-68	176	1999-00	170	08:29
1968-69	164	2000-01	83	08:19
1969-70	122	2001-02	201	07:40
1970-71	206	2002-03	162	07:57
1971-72	180	2003-04	157	07:44
1972-73	164	2004-05	65	08:14
1973-74	60	2005-06	208	07:56
1974 ³	87	2006-07	146	07:40
1974-75	198	2007-08	165	07:55

Notes: Swearing-in days at the beginning of each Parliament are included in the figures for the Session concerned

¹Session lasted 10 days in September 1948

²Session lasted from March to October 1950

³Session lasted from March to July 1974

Source: *Sessional Returns and House of Commons Factsheet M7 Parliamentary Elections, Factsheet P4 Sittings of the House*

Shorter sessions in the table are due in the main to the calling of a general election in that session (for instance in 1992, 1997 and 2001). The extremely short session in 1948 is due to it being created especially to deal with the second passage of the Parliament Bill through both Houses.¹³ In general, a short session is usually followed by a relatively long session.

¹³ SN/PC/675, *The Parliament Acts*

In non-election years and excluding the extremely short Session of 1948, Parliament has sat on average for 209 days per session since 1944-45. Since the 1997-98 sitting day figure of 241, there hasn't been a session which has exceeded the average figure. The highest number of sitting days in a session since 1944-45 is the 246 days for which Parliament sat in 1966-67

Westminster Hall

There has always been more demand for time for debates in the Chamber of the House of Commons than could be satisfied. Members want time to debate issues of importance to their constituents, and they want time to propose their own pieces of legislation (Private Members' Bills) as well as contributing to debates on the Government's legislation. To fulfil some of this demand, the Modernisation Committee proposed in September 1998 that a room in Westminster Hall could be used for extra debates.¹⁴ Four and a half hours are available for adjournment debates initiated by back benchers on Tuesday and Wednesday and three hours are available on Thursdays for debates on Select Committee reports or on a subject chosen by the Government. In November 1999 the first debates were held.

The following table shows the total sitting time in Westminster Hall in each Session since sittings there began in 1999:

Table 13: Sittings in Westminster Hall, 1999-2000 to 2007-08

Session	Total sitting time (hours and minutes)
1999-00	352.40
2000-01 (a)	185.49
2001-02 (b)	474.38
2002-03	431.06
2003-04	411.16
2004-05 (a)	154.16
2005-06 (b)	530.11
2006-07	355.22
2007-08	429.43

(a) Short session

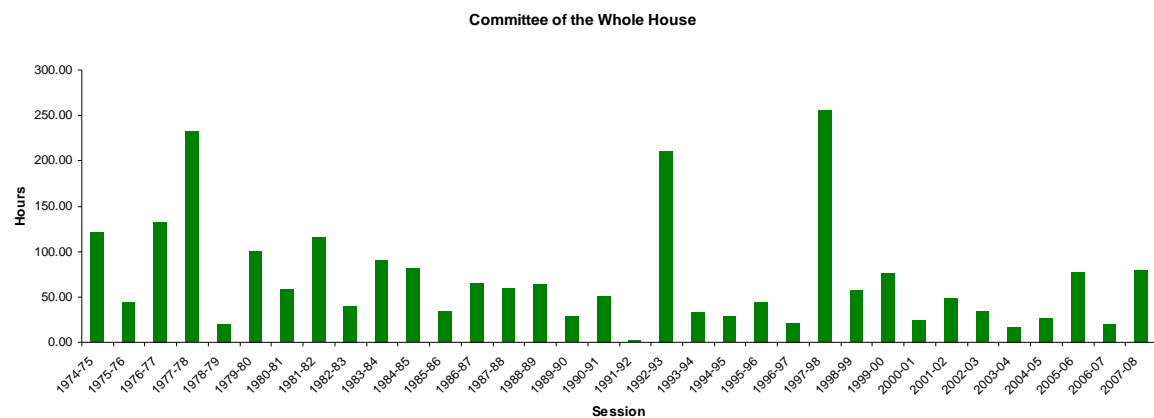
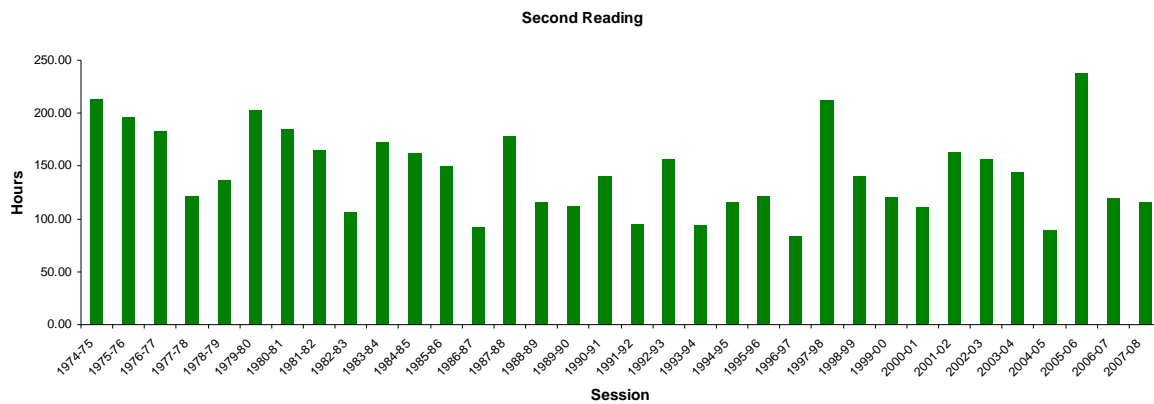
(b) Long session

Source: *Sessional returns of the House of Commons*

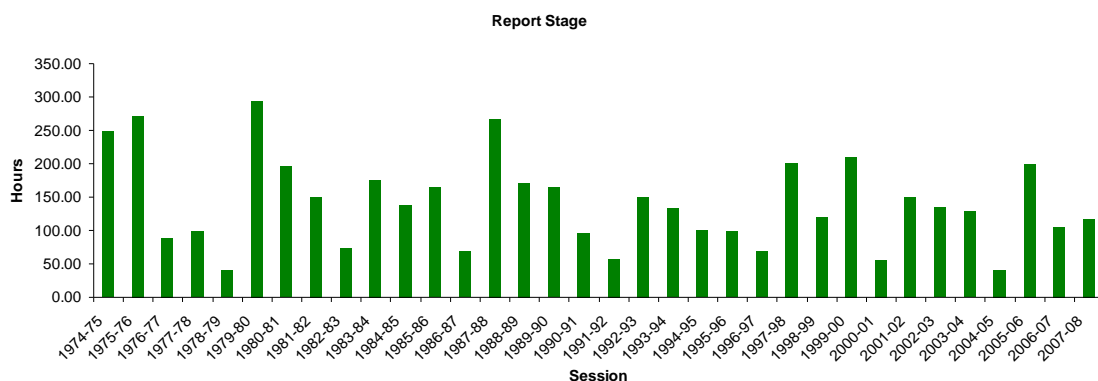
¹⁴ Modernisation of the House of Commons Committee, *Parliamentary Calendar: Initial Proposals*, HC 60 1998-99

Time devoted to different types of business

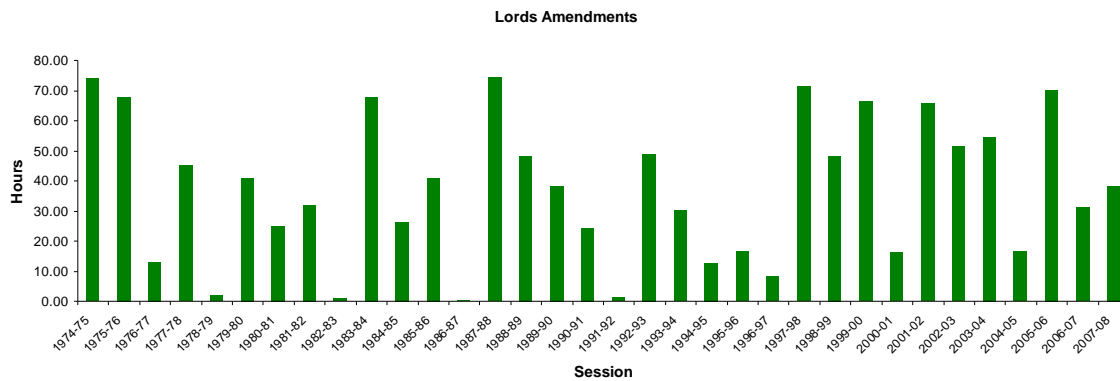
The following charts show the amount of time dedicated each Session to different stages of Government Bills:



The exceptional amount of time spent on Government Bills in the Committee of the Whole House stage in 1992-93 and 1997-98 was due to the number of important Constitutional Bills going through Parliament in those sessions. In 1992-93 the European Communities (Amendment) Bill spent 23 days in Committee of the Whole House in the Commons. In 1997-98, The *Northern Ireland Bill* spent 4 days in Committee of the Whole House; the *Human Rights Bill*, 5; the *Scotland Bill*, 8 and the *Government of Wales Bill*, 7.



There has been a slight tendency for the amount of time spent on the Report stage to decline.



The amount of time spent debating Lords amendments in the House of Commons has increased since 1997, particularly in the last Session of each Parliament. It may be interesting to compare this chart with the chart on the number of Government defeats in the House of Lords, below, which also shows an increase since 1997.

The data for these charts are in the following table:

Table 14: Distribution of time spent on Government bills (hours)

Session	Second Reading	Committee of the Whole House	Report Stage	Third Reading	Lords Amendments
1974-75	213.00	121.00	248.00	26.00	74.00
1975-76	197.00	44.00	271.00	36.00	68.00
1976-77	183.00	132.00	89.00	16.00	13.00
1977-78	121.00	232.00	98.00	24.00	45.00
1978-79	137.00	20.00	40.00	4.00	2.00
1979-80	203.00	101.00	295.00	32.00	41.00
1980-81	185.00	58.00	196.00	21.00	25.00
1981-82	165.00	116.00	150.00	27.00	32.00
1982-83	107.00	40.00	74.00	11.00	1.00
1983-84	173.00	91.00	176.00	40.00	68.00
1984-85	162.14	81.29	138.59	26.36	26.24
1985-86	150.56	34.12	164.19	26.29	41.09
1986-87	92.36	66.17	69.03	-	0.34
1987-88	178.29	59.05	266.52	27.49	74.30
1988-89	116.39	64.41	171.06	34.46	48.27
1989-90	112.33	28.52	164.08	16.04	38.40
1990-91	140.59	51.17	95.47	19.29	24.52
1991-92	95.04	2.36	57.18	14.41	1.28
1992-93	156.47	210.58	150.31	28.49	49.00
1993-94	94.34	33.21	133.04	17.40	30.31
1994-95	115.51	28.53	100.00	13.51	12.55
1995-96	121.13	44.13	98.04	12.58	16.37
1996-97	84.35	21.40	68.38	4.35	8.27
1997-98	212.20	255.52	201.08	25.52	71.50
1998-99	140.01	57.26	120.53	17.10	48.37
1999-00	120.19	76.56	210.37	21.58	66.29
2000-01	111.44	24.33	56.24	16.08	16.08
2001-02	163.01	48.47	149.56	34.58	65.56
2002-03	157.07	34.05	134.05	19.42	51.53
2003-04	144.34	16.50	129.06	22.43	54.52
2004-05	89.43	26.42	41.49	13.23	16.57
2005-06	237.81	77.18	199.51	34.53	70.29
2006-07	119.48	20.44	105.17	18.04	31.22
2007-08	115.61	79.20	117.06	15.40	38.29

Source: House of Commons *Sessional Returns*, collected in *Time Spent on Government Bills*, Parliamentary Information List 2284

1.4 Petitions

The right to petition the Monarch for redress of personal grievances has probably been exercised since Saxon times. It was recognised in the *Magna Carta*, and the *Bill of Rights* of 1688 restated the right clearly, "... it is the right of the subjects to petition the King, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal". Petitions are not as popular as they were in the 19th Century, and in the short session of 2000-01 only 36 were presented to Parliament. Nevertheless, they have seen something of a revival in the last few years, as the following table shows:

Table 15: Petitions presented to Parliament at various dates since 1785

Session	Number
1785-9 ^c	176
1811-15	1,100
1837-1841 ^c	17,600
1843	33,898
1893-94	33,742
1983-04	764
1989-90	960
1990-91	183
1991-92 ^a	452
1992-93 ^b	251
1993-94	102
1994-95	119
1995-96	77
1996-97 ^a	55
1997-98 ^b	99
1998-99	99
1999-00	87
2000-01 ^a	36
2001-02 ^b	129
2002-03	220
2003-04	128
2004-05 ^a	51
2005-06 ^b	293
2006-07	161
2007-08	203

^a Short sessions (October 1991 to March 1992; October 1996 to March 1997;

December 2000 to May 2001; November 2004 to April 2005)

^b Long sessions (April 1992 to October 1993, May 1997 to October 1998,

June 2001 to November 2002; May 2005 to November 2006)

^c Average number per year

Source: House of Commons fact sheet P7: *Petitions*; PIMS

2 Members of Parliament

2.1 House of Commons

Numbers

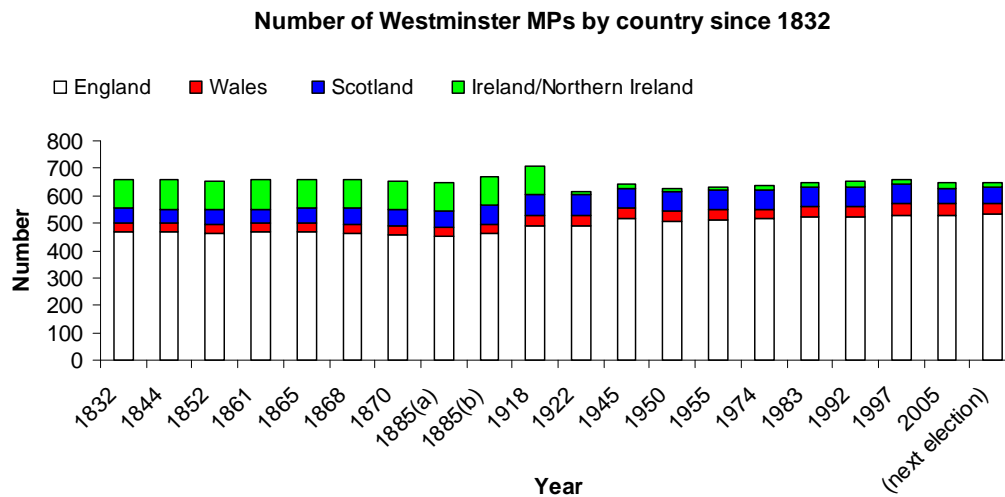


Table 16: Number of Westminster MPs by country since 1832

	Seat by Country				Total seats
	England	Wales	Scotland	Ireland/Northern Ireland	
1832	468	32	53	105	658
1844	466	32	53	105	656
1852	464	32	53	105	654
1861	466	32	53	105	656
1865	468	32	53	105	658
1868	460	33	60	105	658
1870	456	33	60	103	652
1885(a)	452	33	60	103	648
1885(b)	461	34	72	103	670
1918	492	36	74	105	707
1922	492	36	74	13	615
1945	517	36	74	13	640
1950	506	36	71	12	625
1955	511	36	71	12	630
1974	516	36	71	12	635
1983	523	38	72	17	650
1992	524	38	72	17	651
1997	529	40	72	18	659
2005	529	40	59	18	646
(next election)	533	40	59	18	650

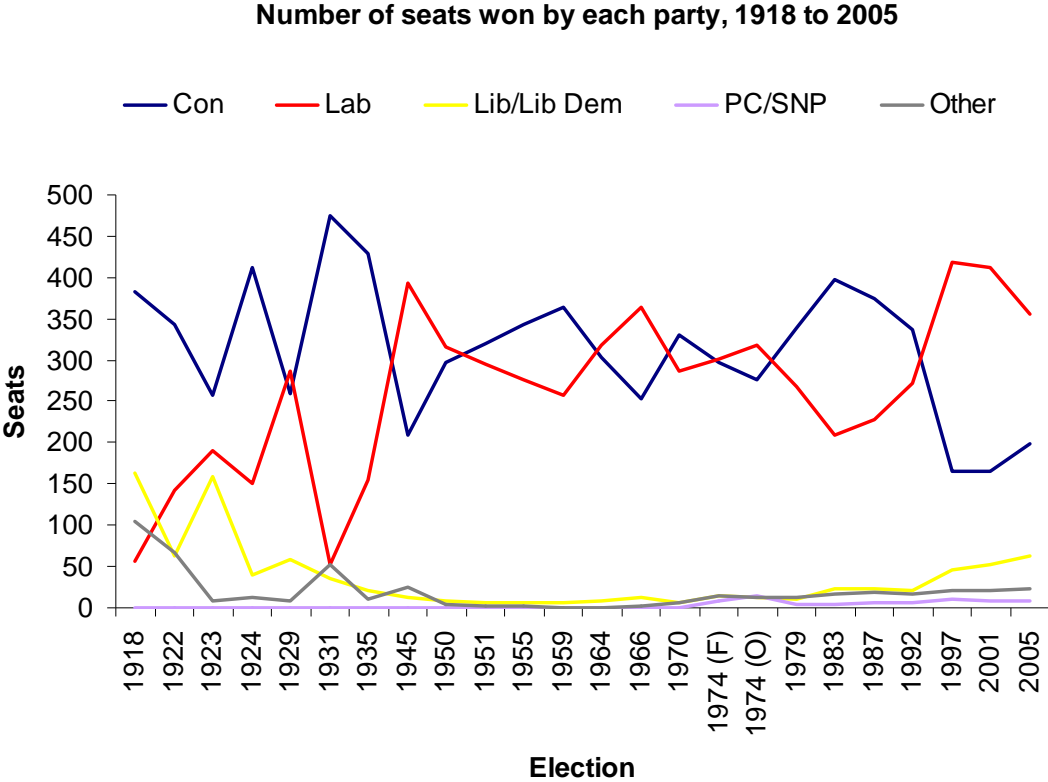
Source: Rallings & Thrasher, *British Electoral Facts 1832-2006*, Ashgate Publishing Ltd

(a) Changes in June 1885

(b) Changes at UK General Election November-December 1885

Party

The party composition of the House of Commons since 1918 is shown in the following chart and table:¹⁵



¹⁵ Elections are not covered in detail by this paper. For more detail, see House of Commons Research Paper 08/12, *Election Statistics: UK 1918-2007* and others in the elections series

Table 17: Seats won by party at General Elections, 1918 to 2005

	Con ^(a)	Lab	Lib ^(b)	PC/SNP	Other	Total
1918	382	57	163	0	105	707
1922	344	142	62	0	67	615
1923	258	191	158	0	8	615
1924	412	151	40	0	12	615
1929	260	287	59	0	9	615
1931	474	52	36	0	53	615
1935	429	154	21	0	11	615
1945	210	393	12	0	25	640
1950	297	315	9	0	4	625
1951	321	295	6	0	3	625
1955	344	277	6	0	3	630
1959	365	258	6	0	1	630
1964	303	317	9	0	1	630
1966	253	363	12	0	2	630
1970	330	287	6	1	6	630
1974 (F)	297	301	14	9	14	635
1974 (O)	276	319	13	14	13	635
1979	339	268	11	4	13	635
1983	397	209	23	4	17	650
1987	375	229	22	6	18	650
1992	336	271	20	7	17	651
1997	165	418	46	10	20	659
2001	166	412	52	9	20	659
2005	198	355	62	9	22	646

(a) Includes Coalition Conservative for 1918; includes National for 1931; includes National, National Liberal and National Labour for 1931-35; includes National and National Liberal for 1945. Includes National Liberal and Conservative 1945-70

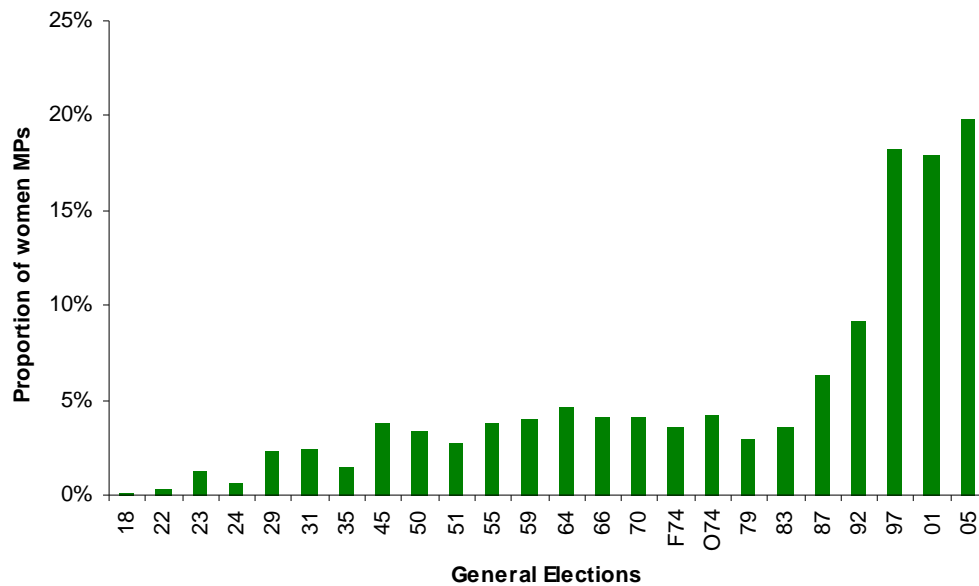
(b) Includes Coalition Liberal Party for 1918; includes National Liberal for 1922; includes Independent Liberal for 1931; Liberal/SDP Alliance 1983-87; Liberal Democrats from 1992.

Sources: House of Commons Library, Election Statistics UK 1918-2007, Research Paper 08/12

Gender

In 1987 there were 41 women MPs, 6% of all MPs. The number of women MPs rose over the next two parliaments to 120 in 1997 (122 following the election of two women at by-elections). That number fell to 118 after the 2001 Election but rose to 128 after the 2005 General Election. Women were now 1 in 5 of all MPs, the highest ever number and proportion.

The increase in women Members is shown by the following chart:

Women MPs, 1918-2005**Table 18: Women MPs after General Elections, 1918 to 2005**

	Con	Lab	LD	Other	Total	% MPs
1918	0	0	0	1	1	0.1%
1922	1	0	1	0	2	0.3%
1923	3	3	2	0	8	1.3%
1924	3	1	0	0	4	0.7%
1929	3	9	1	1	14	2.3%
1931	13	0	1	1	15	2.4%
1935	6	1	1	1	9	1.5%
1945	1	21	1	1	24	3.8%
1950	6	14	0	1	21	3.4%
1951	6	11	0	0	17	2.7%
1955	10	14	0	0	24	3.8%
1959	12	13	0	0	25	4.0%
1964	11	18	0	0	29	4.6%
1966	7	19	0	0	26	4.1%
1970	15	10	0	1	26	4.1%
1974 (F)	9	13	0	1	23	3.6%
1974 (O)	7	18	0	2	27	4.3%
1979	8	11	0	0	19	3.0%
1983	13	10	0	0	23	3.5%
1987	17	21	2	1	41	6.3%
1992	20	37	2	1	60	9.2%
1997	13	101	3	3	120	18.2%
2001	14	95	5	4	118	17.9%
2005	17	98	10	3	128	19.8%

Source: *Women in the House of Commons, House of Commons Information Office Factsheet*

Labour MPs make up the majority of female MPs, especially since 1997.

Table 19: Women MPs by party after General Elections

	Number				Percentage of party total			
	Lab	Con	LibDem	Other	Lab	Con	LibDem	Other
1979	11	8	0	0	4%	2%	0%	0%
1983	10	13	0	0	5%	3%	0%	0%
1987	21	17	2	1	9%	5%	9%	4%
1992	37	20	2	1	14%	6%	10%	4%
1997	101	13	3	3	24%	8%	7%	10%
2001	95	14	5	4	23%	8%	10%	14%
2005	98	17	10	3	28%	9%	16%	10%

Source: Research Paper 09/31: Members since 1979

Between the 2005 Election and September 2008, three women MPs were replaced by men at by-elections. That left the parties' female representation as follows:

	Lab	Con	LibDem	Other	Lab	Con	LibDem	Other
September 2008	96	17	9	3	27%	9%	14%	8%

Occupation and education

Around one-third of MPs went to fee-paying schools. This proportion varies by party – from 18% of Labour MPs to 60% of Conservative and 39% of Liberal Democrat. By comparison, 8% of pupils aged 11 and over in UK schools are in non-maintained (fee-paying) schools.¹⁶ Around three-quarters of MPs elected in 2005 were graduates. One-quarter were from Oxford or Cambridge universities.

Table 20: Education of Members elected in 2005 (3 main parties)

	Lab	Con	LD
Fee-paying school	63	118	24
	18%	60%	39%
University	226	160	49
	64%	81%	79%
of which:			
Oxford & Cambridge	58	86	19
	16%	43%	31%

Source: Butler & Kavanagh *the British General Election of 2005* Table 10.5

The Nuffield election studies provide analyses of occupations of candidates and MPs elected at each election. These data are restricted to the three main parties but give a guide to the occupational background of MPs over the period. The following table summarises the proportions in the main groups:

¹⁶ 2003-4 figure; DFES *Education and Training Statistics for the UK 2004*

Table 21: MPs' occupations 1987 to 2005

	Number					Percent				
	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005
Professions	262	258	272	270	242	41.7%	41.1%	43.2%	42.9%	39.3%
Barrister	57	53	36	33	34	9.1%	8.5%	5.7%	5.2%	5.5%
Solicitor	31	30	28	35	38	4.9%	4.8%	4.5%	5.6%	6.2%
Doctor	5	6	9	8	6	0.8%	1.0%	1.4%	1.3%	1.0%
Civil service/local govt	22	26	37	35	28	3.5%	4.1%	5.9%	5.6%	4.6%
Teachers: University/college	36	45	61	53	44	5.7%	7.2%	9.7%	8.4%	7.2%
Teacher: school	48	57	65	64	47	7.6%	9.1%	10.3%	10.2%	7.6%
Business	161	152	113	107	118	25.6%	24.2%	18.0%	17.0%	19.2%
Miscellaneous	133	154	188	200	217	21.1%	24.6%	29.9%	31.7%	35.3%
White Collar	27	46	72	76	78	4.3%	7.3%	11.4%	12.1%	12.7%
Politician/Pol organiser	34	46	60	66	87	5.4%	7.3%	9.5%	10.5%	14.1%
Publisher/Journalist	42	44	47	50	43	6.7%	7.0%	7.5%	7.9%	7.0%
Manual Workers	73	63	56	53	38	11.6%	10.0%	8.9%	8.4%	6.2%
Miner	17	13	13	12	11	2.7%	2.1%	2.1%	1.9%	1.8%
Total	629	627	629	630	615	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Butler et al, *The British General Election of 2005* and earlier editions

The proportion with professional backgrounds has remained fairly constant at around 40%. However, within this category the proportion of former barristers has fallen while the proportion of former solicitors and teachers from universities/colleges has risen. 2005 also saw a rise in the proportion of MPs with a business background (largely as result of an increase in the number in this category from the Conservative side); and growth in the "Miscellaneous" group (largely due to an increase in the number of in the "politician/political organiser" category).

A breakdown of MPs' occupations by party for those elected in 2005 is given in Table 22:

Table 22: Occupation of MPs elected at the 2005 General Election

	Number			Percentage		
	Lab	Con	LibDem	Lab	Con	LibDem
Professions	141	76	25	40%	38%	40%
Barrister	10	22	2	3%	11%	3%
Solicitor	18	18	2	5%	9%	3%
Doctor	1	3	2	0%	2%	3%
Civil service/local govt	22	3	3	6%	2%	5%
Teachers: University/college	41	0	3	12%	0%	5%
Teacher: school	32	6	9	9%	3%	15%
Business	25	75	18	7%	38%	29%
Miscellaneous	154	45	18	43%	23%	29%
White Collar	70	4	4	20%	2%	6%
Politician/Political organiser	60	20	7	17%	10%	11%
Publisher/Journalist	24	14	5	7%	7%	8%
Manual Workers	35	2	1	10%	1%	2%
Miner	10	1	0	3%	1%	0%
Total	355	198	62	100%	100%	100%

Source: Butler et al, *The British General Election of 2005*

Age

The average age of MPs at election decreased at the 1997 General Election, largely as result of the election of 10 MPs aged under 30 and a reduction in the number of MPs aged 60 or more. Since 1997, the average age of MPs elected has risen, from 49 years in 1997 to 51 years in 2005. In 2005 56% (363) of those elected were aged over 50, compared with 47% (309) in 1992, and 46% (303) in 1997. The 14 MPs aged over 70 elected in 2005 was higher than at any previous election since 1979, when it had also been 14.

The following table shows the ages of Members at the start of the current and previous Parliaments.

Table 23: Age of MPs elected at General Elections since 1979

Election year	Average Age at election	Age at election (years)						Total
		18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	
1979	49.6	6	120	205	203	87	14	635
1983	48.8	10	120	223	201	86	9	649
1987	49.0	4	112	252	197	79	6	650
1992	50.0	1	82	259	211	95	3	651
1997	49.3	10	92	255	225	69	8	659
2001	50.3	4	79	236	247	83	10	659
2005	51.2	3	89	191	249	100	14	646

Source: Research Paper 09/31: Members since 1979

Of those elected at the 2005 General Election, Labour MPs are older, on average than those from the other major parties. 90% of Labour MPs are aged over 40; compared to 83% of Conservative and 69% of Liberal Democrat.

Table 24: Age by party of MPs elected at the 2005 General Election

	Number	Average age (years)	Under 40	41-59	60+
Lab	355	52.7	10%	71%	19%
Con	198	49.9	17%	65%	18%
LibDem	62	46.5	31%	60%	10%
Other	31	51.3	13%	77%	10%
All	646	51.2	14%	68%	18%

Source: Research Paper 09/31: Members since 1979

Ethnicity

The history of non-white MPs goes a long way back, probably beginning with David Ochterlony Dyce Sombre, who was of mixed European and Indian descent. He was elected to represent the seat of Sudbury in Suffolk in 1841. A number of minority ethnic MPs were elected at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th Centuries, but the second half of the 20th Century saw a reduction in representation of ethnic minorities, all the more notable since this was when significant numbers of minority ethnic immigrants arrived in the UK. The first minority ethnic MPs since 1945 were elected in 1987: Diane Abbott (Hackney North & Stoke Newington), Paul Boateng (Brent South), Bernie Grant (Tottenham) and Keith Vaz (Leicester East). Diane Abbott was the first black woman MP.¹⁷

Analysis of ethnic minority representation is difficult, because ethnicity is both sensitive and difficult to define. Work such as this generally relies on self-definition. At present there are 15 non-white MPs elected to the House of Commons,¹⁸ which is 2.3% of the 646 MPs from all

¹⁷ For more information on ethnic minorities in politics, see Standard Note SN/SG/1156, [Ethnic Minorities in Politics, Government and Public Life](#), November 2008

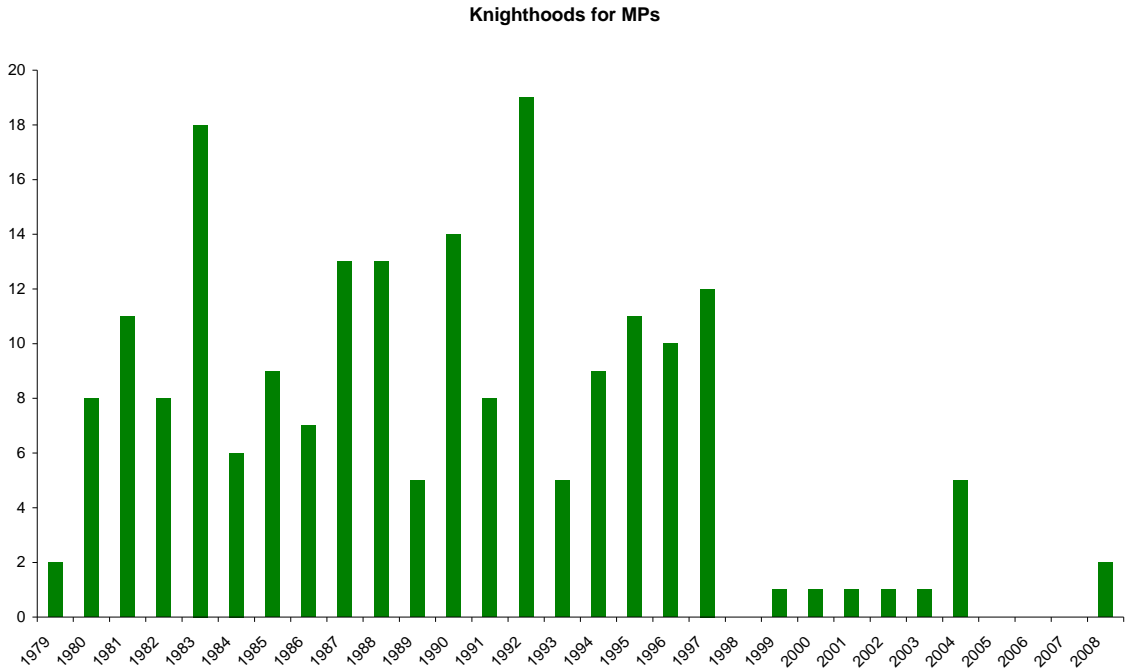
¹⁸ Based on the list provided by [Operation Black Vote](#)

parties. If the non-white population were represented proportionally in the House of Commons, there would be 51 MPs.¹⁹

Women from ethnic minorities are particularly under-represented. At present there are only two black women Members, and no Asian woman has ever been elected.

Honours

The following chart clearly shows how the change in Government in 1997 was associated with a decline in the number of knighthoods (includes women MPs being made Dames) conferred on Members of Parliament:

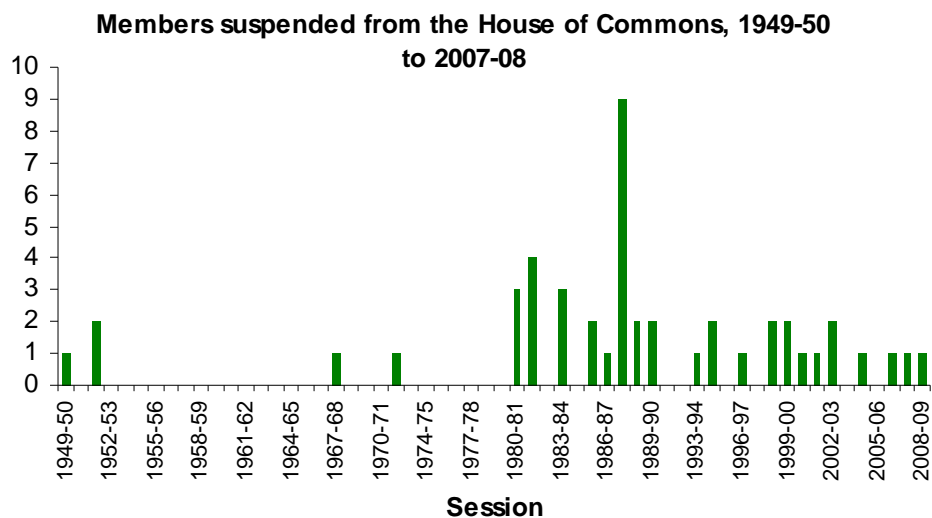


¹⁹ Based on the current estimated UK population of 60.6 million of whom 7.9% are non-white, according to the 2001 census: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/index.html> . More recent estimates of the non-white population can be higher, and estimates for a representative number of minority ethnic MPs may vary: the report for the Government Equalities Office *How to achieve better BME political representation*, published in May 2008, put the figure at 58.

Table 25: Knighthoods conferred on MPs by calendar year

Year	Knighthoods conferred
1979	2
1980	8
1981	11
1982	8
1983	18
1984	6
1985	9
1986	7
1987	13
1988	13
1989	5
1990	14
1991	8
1992	19
1993	5
1994	9
1995	11
1996	10
1997	12
1998	0
1999	1
2000	1
2001	1
2002	1
2003	1
2004	5
2005	0
2006	0
2007	0
2008	2

Source: House of Commons Information Office, Information list 15.
 Note: MPs knighted (includes women) by date of award

Discipline

Until the 1980s suspension from the House of Commons was a rare event. The year with the most suspensions, 1987-88, brought calls for stiffer penalties for those Members who were 'named' or suspended. Conservative Members thought that their Labour colleagues were becoming frustrated by their long period in opposition. Commentators said that the upsurge in suspensions was a result not only of increased disorder, but also of Members' reluctance to resume their seat or subsequently to leave the Chamber voluntarily when asked by the Speaker. If the Member does not take advantage of these opportunities to comply voluntarily, formal suspension follows. The length of suspension was normally 5 days for a first offence, 20 days for a second offence and a period to be determined by Parliament for further offences. The Member is not paid during the period of suspension.²⁰

Data on suspensions are in the following table:

²⁰ For further information, see the Fact Sheet G06, *Disciplinary and Penal Powers of the House*, 2003

Table 26: Number of suspensions by Session, 1949-50 to 2008-09

Session	Number of suspensions	Session	Number of suspensions
1949-50	1	1979-80	
1950-51		1980-81	3
1951-52	2	1981-82	4
1952-53		1982-83	
1953-54		1983-84	3
1954-55		1984-85	
1955-56		1985-86	2
1956-57		1986-87	1
1957-58		1987-88	9
1958-59		1988-89	2
1959-60		1989-90	2
1960-61		1990-91	
1961-62		1992-93	
1962-63		1993-94	1
1963-64		1994-95	2
1964-65		1995-96	
1965-66		1996-97	1
1966-67		1997-98	
1967-68	1	1998-99	2
1968-69		1999-00	2
1969-70		2000-01	1
1970-71		2001-02	1
1971-72	1	2002-03	2
1972-73		2003-04	
1974-75		2004-05	1
1975-76		2005-06	
1976-77		2006-07	1
1977-78		2007-08	1
1978-79		2008-09	1

*Source: Parliamentary Information List 2430, Members
Suspended from the House of Commons*

Turnover of MPs

The turnover of Members in the House of Commons is the movement of MPs in and out of Parliament. Below is a table showing the number of new Members who have entered Parliament. Note that 'new' Members include those former Members who were re-entering the House after a period of not being an MP, sometimes referred to as 'retreads'.

Table 27: Entrants and leavers at General Elections 1979 to 2005

Year	New Members	Defeated Members	Retiring members	Total Members	Turnover(%)
1979	128	65	61	635	20.2
1983	156	64	71	650	24.0
1987	130	40	86	650	20.0
1992	138	59	79	651	21.2
1997	259	132	116	659	39.3
2001	99	22	78	659	15.0
2005	123	50	86	646	19.0

Source: House of Commons Library, Members since 1979 database; *Times Guide to the House of Commons 1979*, Times Newspapers, 1979

Despite the Conservative victory in 1979, the turnover of MPs at this election was relatively modest. The turnover at the 1997 General Election was far higher, with 259 new MPs elected, almost 40% of total MPs, and 183 new Labour Members taking their seats. The following election in 2001 was relatively quiet in terms of turnover, while the 2005 election seems to have returned to the former trend.

Change in number of MPs by party

The following table outlines seat changes by party at General Elections from 1886 to 2005. Boundary changes for the 1918 General Election mean that the calculation of gains and losses is not applicable. Data for the 1945, 1950, 1955, February 1974, 1983 and 1997 elections are also affected by periodic boundary reviews.

Table 28: Change in number of MPs by party at General Elections, 1886 to 2005

Election	Conservative net change	Labour net change	Lib net change	Others net change
1886	44		-44	0
1892	-49		51	-2
1895	90		-89	-1
1900	3	2	-4	-1
1906	-211	25	185	1
1910 (J)	103	-4	-98	-1
1910 (D)	0	2	-4	2
1918	-	-	-	-
1922	-18	67	-39	-10
1923	-88	47	42	-1
1924	155	-42	-114	1
1929	-140	126	14	0
1931	217	-215	6	-8
1935	-84	94	-12	-2
1945	-187	199	-8	-4
1950	11	-8	2	-5
1951	22	-19	-3	0
1955	11	-10	0	-1
1959	23	-23	0	0
1964	-56	56	2	-2
1966	-51	48	2	1
1970	67	-60	-7	0
1974 (F)	-14	3	2	9
1974 (O)	-20	19	-2	3
1979	55	-40	-3	-12
1983	7	-5	-2	-2
1987	-17	21	-5	1
1992	-41	42	-2	1
1997	-178	146	28	4
2001	1	-6	6	-1
2005	33	-47	11	3

Source: Rallings & Thrasher, *British Electoral Facts 1832-2006*

House of Commons Library Research Papers: *General Election Results 7 June 2001, General Election 2005*

Notes: 'Conservative net change' includes Liberal Unionists 1886-1910 (D); National, National Liberal and National Labour, 1931-45.

'Lib net change' includes both Liberal and National Liberals in 1922; Independent Liberals in 1931; SDP/Liberal Alliance 1983/87.

Figures adjusted for 1885, 1918, 1945, 1950, 1955, 1974(F), 1983, 1997 and 2005 due to boundary changes

The biggest single net increase and decrease came in 1931, when the Conservatives gained 217 seats while Labour lost 215. Despite the landslide victory for the Conservatives, a National Government was formed under the leadership of National Labour leader Ramsay MacDonald.

The 1997 General Election saw the biggest changeover of seats since 1945, with Labour gaining 146 seats and the Conservatives losing 178.

2.2 House of Lords

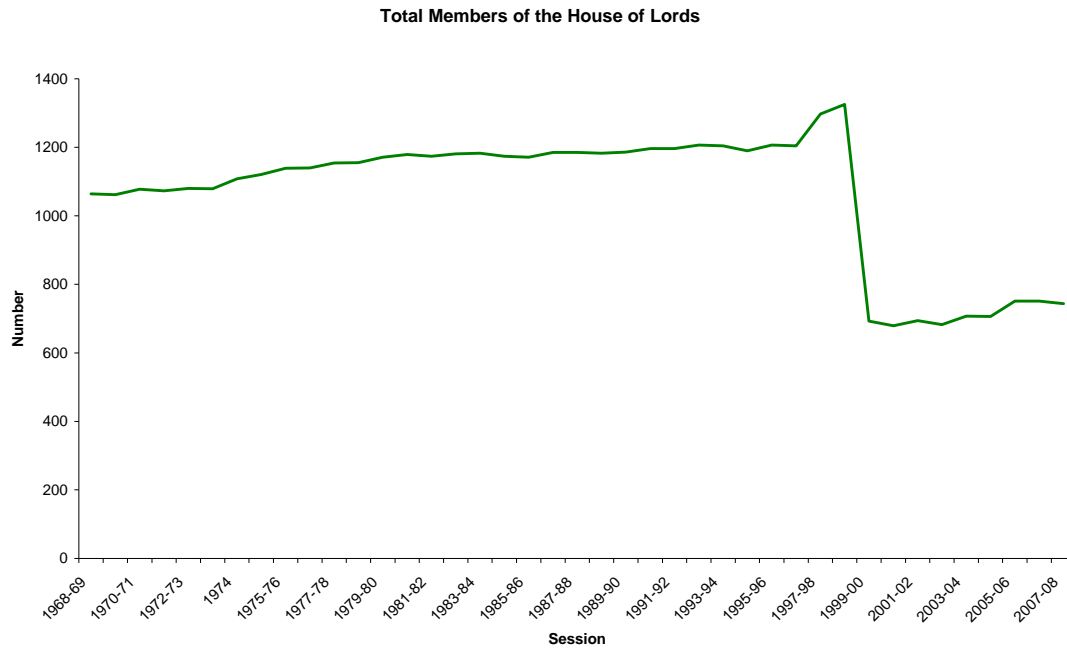
Numbers

The following table and chart show how the total number of Members of the House of Lords has changed since 1968-69.

Table 29: Total membership of the House of Lords by Session, 1968-69 to 2007-08

Session	Total Members
1968-69	1,064
1969-70	1,062
1970-71	1,078
1971-72	1,073
1972-73	1,080
1973-74	1,079
1974	1,108
1974-75	1,121
1975-76	1,139
1976-77	1,140
1977-78	1,154
1978-79	1,155
1979-80	1,171
1980-81	1,179
1981-82	1,174
1982-83	1,181
1983-84	1,183
1984-85	1,174
1985-86	1,171
1986-87	1,185
1987-88	1,185
1988-89	1,183
1989-90	1,186
1990-91	1,196
1991-92	1,196
1992-93	1,207
1993-94	1,204
1994-95	1,190
1995-96	1,207
1996-97	1,204
1997-98	1,297
1998-99	1,325
1999-00	693
2000-01	679
2001-02	694
2002-03	682
2003-04	707
2004-05	706
2005-06	751
2006-07	751
2007-08	744

Source: House of Lords Sessional Statistics



From 1968-69 to 1998-99, the membership of the House of Lords increased by nearly 300. In the first two parliamentary sessions of Tony Blair's premiership (1997-98 and 1998-99), membership of the House of Lords increased by 121, the sharpest increases in membership in the series.

The passage of the *House of Lords Act in 1999* removed the right of most hereditary peers to sit in the House, stating that "*No-one shall be a member of the House of Lords by virtue of a hereditary peerage.*"²¹ This piece of legislation saw the membership of the House of Lords almost halve, taking the total number of members from 1,325 to 693.

Since 2000-01, the first Session after the 1999 Act, the membership of the Lords has increased by 679 to 744 in 2007-08.

²¹ [House of Lords Act, 1999](#)

Party

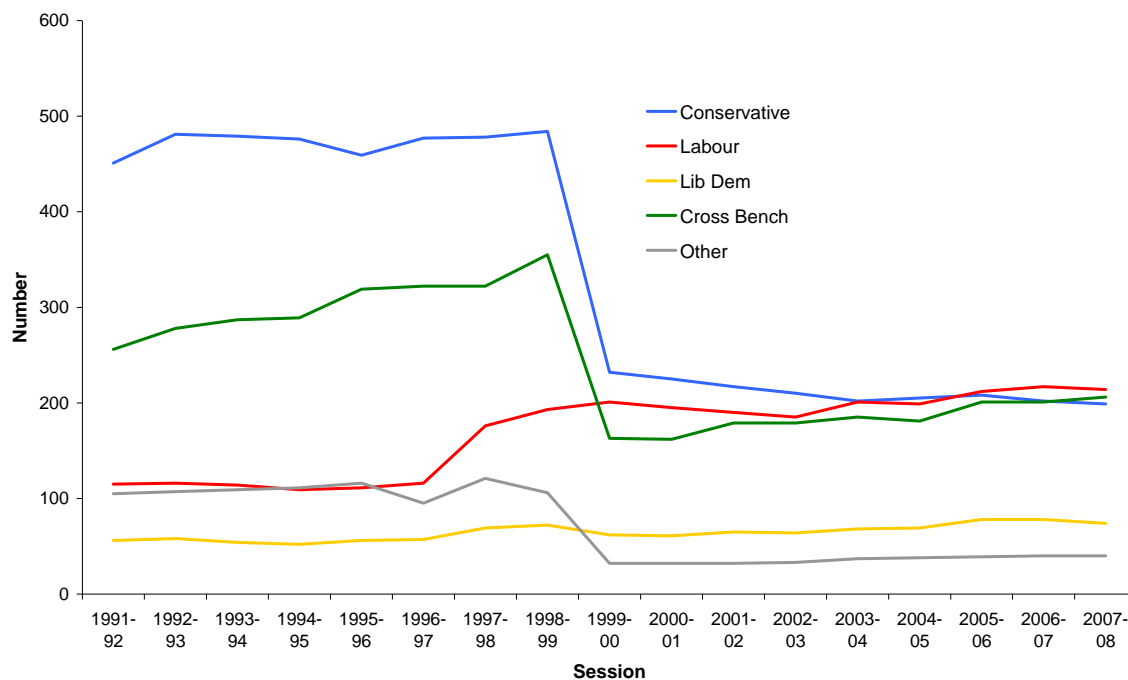
Below are a table and chart which show the composition of the House of Lords by party.

Table 30: Peers by party and Session, 1991-92 to 2007-08

Session	Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	Cross Bench	Other	Total
1991-92	451	115	56	256	105	983
1992-93	481	116	58	278	107	1,040
1993-94	479	114	54	287	109	1,043
1994-95	476	109	52	289	111	1,037
1995-96	459	111	56	319	116	1,061
1996-97	477	116	57	322	95	1,067
1997-98	478	176	69	322	121	1,166
1998-99	484	193	72	355	106	1,210
1999-00	232	201	62	163	32	690
2000-01	225	195	61	162	32	675
2001-02	217	190	65	179	32	683
2002-03	210	185	64	179	33	671
2003-04	202	201	68	185	37	693
2004-05	205	199	69	181	38	692
2005-06	208	212	78	201	39	738
2006-07	202	217	78	201	40	738
2007-08	199	214	74	206	40	733

Source: House of Lords Sessional Business Statistics

Note: These totals exclude peers without Writs of Summons or on leave of absence



Historically, Conservatives were the largest party in the House of Lords, having more than 450 peers up to 1998-99, over a hundred more than the number of Cross-bench peers.

The House of Lords Act 1999 left the number of Conservative, Cross-Bench and Labour peers much more equal. In 1999-00, the number of Conservative peers fell from 484 the previous session to 232, while similarly the number of cross-benchers fell from 355 to 163. By contrast, the number of Labour peers rose from 193 (1998-99) to 201 (1999-00).

Peerage type

Before the Labour Government reforms in 1999 there were over 1,000 members of the House of Lords (although in practice only a portion were “active”). The number of peers increased as the number of Life Peers grew. The 92 peerages created under the 1999 *House of Lords Act* are life peerages conferred on hereditary peers. Originally, the Bill was designed to abolish hereditary peers altogether, but an amendment moved by Lord Weatherill allowed 92 to remain Members of the House.²² When vacancies arise due to the death of a hereditary peer, by-elections determine who takes the seat.

Since 2000-01, there has been a marked increase in peerages created under the 1958 Life Peerages Act, from 533 to 603 in 2007-08. The abolition of most hereditary peers means that the majority of members of the Lords were given peerages under the 1958 Act. In 2007-08, the proportion of peers in the House made under the Act stood at 81%. The number of Law Lords created under the *Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1876* was increasing significantly, but has been falling since its peak number of 29 during 2003-04. Figures are in the table overleaf.

²² House of Lords Library Note, *The Weatherhill Amendment*

Table 31: Peers by peerage type and Session, 1968-69 to 2007-08

Session	Archbishops and Bishops	Hereditary Peers		Life Peers		Peers under the House of Lords Act 1999	Total
		By succession	Of first creation	Under the Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1876	Under the Life Peerages Act 1958		
1968-69	26	748	114				1064
1969-70	26	757	101				1062
1970-71	26	764	86				1078
1971-72	24	762	80				1073
1972-73	26	763	75				1080
1973-74	26	764	73				1079
1974	26	763	70				1108
1974-75	26	759	64				1121
1975-76	26	760	58	16	295		1139
1976-77	26	762	51	18	283		1140
1977-78	26	763	49	18	316		1154
1978-79	26	763	46	18	302		1155
1979-80	26	769	39	18	319		1171
1980-81	26	769	35	19	330		1179
1981-82	26	765	34	21	328		1174
1982-83	26	769	30	21	335		1181
1983-84	26	763	30	19	345		1183
1984-85	26	760	29	19	340		1174
1985-86	26	760	30	21	334		1171
1986-87	26	763	29	21	346		1185
1987-88	26	759	25	22	353		1185
1988-89	26	765	20	19	353		1183
1989-90	26	763	20	19	358		1186
1990-91	26	760	19	19	372		1196
1991-92	26	758	19	20	373		1196
1992-93	26	760	15	20	386		1207
1993-94	26	758	15	22	383		1204
1994-95	24	755	15	24	372		1190
1995-96	26	755	12	24	390		1207
1996-97	26	755	10	25	388		1204
1997-98	26	750	9	28	484		1297
1998-99	26	750	8	27	514		1325
1999-00	26			28	547	92	693
2000-01	26			28	533	92	679
2001-02	25			28	550	91	694
2002-03	26			27	537	92	682
2003-04	26			29	561	91	707
2004-05	25			28	562	91	706
2005-06	26			26	607	92	751
2006-07	26			24	609	92	751
2007-08	26			23	603	92	744

Source: House of Lords Sessional Business Statistics

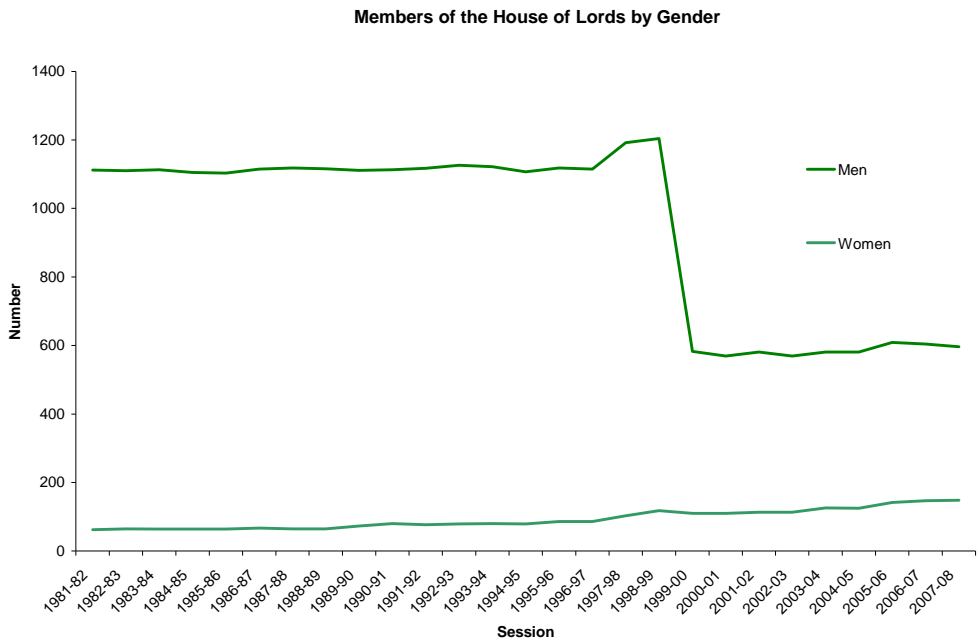
Gender

Table 32 and the accompanying chart show the number of men and women in the House of Lords, by Session:

Table 32: Peers by gender and Session, 1981-82 to 2007-08

Session	Men	Women	Total
1981-82	1,112	62	1,174
1982-83	1,110	65	1,181
1983-84	1,113	64	1,183
1984-85	1,105	64	1,174
1985-86	1,103	64	1,171
1986-87	1,115	67	1,185
1987-88	1,118	65	1,185
1988-89	1,116	65	1,183
1989-90	1,111	73	1,186
1990-91	1,113	80	1,196
1991-92	1,117	77	1,196
1992-93	1,126	79	1,207
1993-94	1,122	80	1,204
1994-95	1,107	79	1,190
1995-96	1,118	86	1,207
1996-97	1,115	86	1,204
1997-98	1,192	103	1,297
1998-99	1,204	118	1,325
1999-00	583	110	693
2000-01	569	110	679
2001-02	581	113	694
2002-03	569	113	682
2003-04	581	126	707
2004-05	581	125	706
2005-06	609	142	751
2006-07	604	147	751
2007-08	596	148	744

Source: House of Lords Sessional Business Statistics
 Figures exclude minors, except for 1981-82 where figures were unavailable



Male dominance in the House of Lords has receded over time. In the 1981-82 session, 94.7 per cent of peers were male, the highest percentage recorded in the data. By contrast in

2007-08, 80.1 per cent of peers were male. The 2007-08 Session included 148 women peers, the highest number ever recorded.

There was a slight downward trend of male dominance in the Lords up to 1998. The biggest factor in the fall of men in the House came with the *House of Lords Act in 1999*. This excluded most hereditary peers and consequently reduced the number of male peers from 1204 to 583. Only 8 women peers left the House as a result of the legislation and the proportion of women peers rose from 9 per cent to 16 per cent.

Ethnicity

Information on ethnicity for the House of Lords is difficult to collate, and no definitive list of ethnic origins exists. In July 2000, The Earl of Listowel asked Her Majesty's Government for a breakdown of Lords membership by ethnicity. Baroness Jay replied as follows:

This information is not collected at present. In order to collect personal information such as this, the Information Office of the House of Lords would need the authority of a domestic sub-committee or the Offices Committee itself. It is for these committees whether they wish to consider the matter.²³

Nevertheless, the history of minority ethnic peers, like that of minority ethnic MPs, goes further back than might be expected. The first Indian peer, and probably the first non-white peer, was Sir Satyendra Sinha, created Baron Sinha of Raipur, a hereditary peerage, in 1919.²⁴ The first peer of African descent is widely reported to have been the Trinidadian cricketer and lawyer Learie Constantine, created Baron Constantine of Maraval and Nelson in 1969. At present there are some 32 non-white members of the current House of Lords.²⁵ This is around 4% of the total of 746 peers.

Peerage creations

In 1876 the *Appellate Jurisdiction Act* provided for the most senior judges to sit in the House of Lords, with the creation of a life peerage. In 1958, the *Life Peerages Act* made it possible for the Government to nominate people to sit in the House of Lords for regular business in that chamber. Since the passing of the *Life Peerages Act*, the number of hereditary peers as a proportion of the total created has declined, as shown in the chart below. Nevertheless, a few hereditary peerages have been created in recent years. The latest, during Tony Blair's tenure as Prime Minister, was the Earldom of Wessex, created for Prince Edward in June 1999. Every Prime Minister since 1958 has ennobled more members of his or her own party than members of opposition parties.²⁶

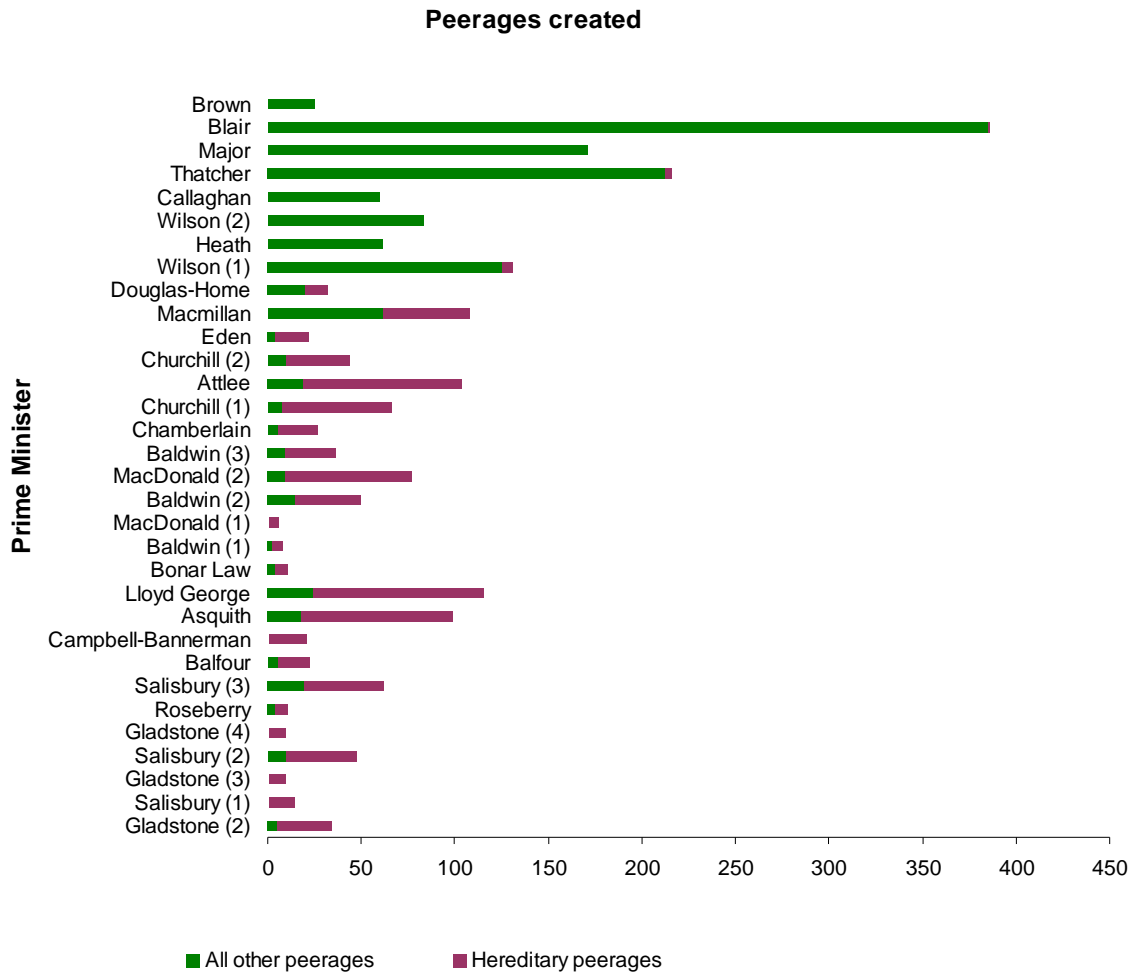
The chart below shows the number of hereditary peerages and the number of other peerages, including law lords under the *Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1876*, created during the duration of each Prime Minister's Government since Gladstone's second period in office, in 1880. Overall, the number of peerages created has increased, with the increase in the number of life peerages created under the 1958 Act exceeding the decline in hereditary peerages created. The chart also shows that Tony Blair created the most life peerages, having created 357 standard life peers, compared with Margaret Thatcher who created only 201 during a longer period in office.

²³ House of Lords Hansard, 26.07.00, 616 c67WA

²⁴ *Columbia Encyclopedia*, 6th edition, Columbia University Press, 2008

²⁵ Based on information compiled by the campaigning group [Operation Black Vote](#)

²⁶ For more information on peerage creations, including professional background and gender of peers, see the House of Lords note, [Peerage Creations, 1958–2008](#).



The data used to create the chart is in the following table:

Table 33: Peerages created by Prime Minister and by type of peerage, 1880 to 2008

Prime Minister	Types of peerage									Days	All hereditary	All other
	Total	A	H	H:I	H:S	L	L:H	P	X			
Gladstone (2)	34	1	20	5	4			3	1	1887	29	5
Salisbury (1)	14		12		1			1		223	13	1
Gladstone (3)	9		7	1				1		174	8	1
Salisbury (2)	48	3	35	2	1			6	1	2213	38	10
Gladstone (4)	9	1	8							567	8	1
Roseberry	11	2	7					2		477	7	4
Salisbury (3)	62	2	40	2	1			12	5	2573	43	19
Balfour	23	1	17					5		1242	17	6
Bannerman	21	1	20							854	20	1
Asquith	99	5	76	4	1			13		3166	81	18
Lloyd George	115	1	90	1				23		2146	91	24
Bonar Law	11		7					4		211	7	4
Baldwin (1)	8	1	6					1		245	6	2
MacDonald (1)	6		5					1		287	5	1
Baldwin (2)	50	3	34	1				11	1	1674	35	15
MacDonald (2)	77	3	67	1				6		2193	68	9
Baldwin (3)	36	2	27					5	2	721	27	9
Chamberlain	27	2	21					4		1078	21	6
Churchill (1)	66	2	58					6		1903	58	8
Attlee	104	9	84	1				10		2283	85	19
Churchill (2)	44	3	31	2	1			6	1	1258	34	10
Eden	22		18					4		645	18	4
Macmillan	108	7	46			46	1	7	1	2473	46	62
Douglas-Home	32	3	12			16		1		363	12	20
Wilson (1)	131	2	6			122		1		2072	6	125
Heath	61	3				58				1354	0	61
Wilson (2)	83	3				80				763	0	83
Callaghan	60	2				58				1124	0	60
Thatcher	216	11	4			201				4226	4	212
Major	171	11				160				2347	0	171
Blair	386	11	1			357	17			3708	1	385
Brown	25	1				24				705	0	25

Peerage types are as follows:

A	Life peerage under the Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1876
H	Hereditary peerage
H:I	Hereditary peerage conferred on a holder of a peerage of Ireland
H:S	Hereditary peerage conferred on a holder of a peerage of Scotland
L	Life peerage under the Life Peerages Act 1958
L:H	Life peerage under the Life Peerages Act 1958 conferred on a hereditary peer
P	Promotion in the peerage of a hereditary peer
X	Additional (eXtra) peerage, not being a promotion, conferred on a hereditary peer

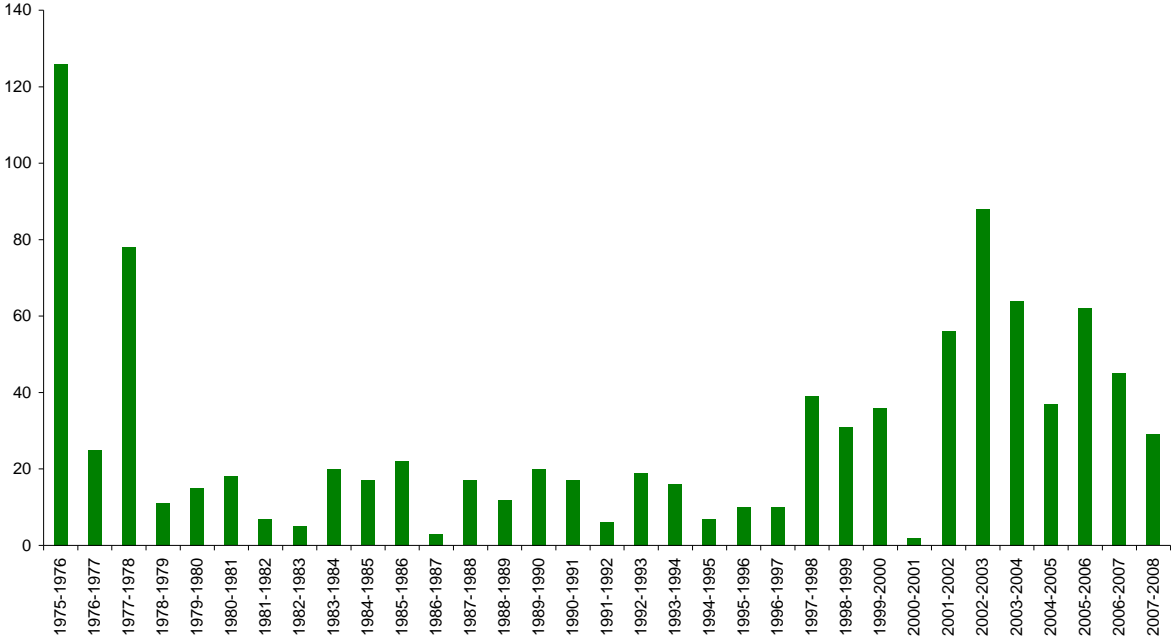
* to 1 June 2009

Source: David Beamish website
<http://website.lineone.net/~david.beamish/admintable.htm>

Government defeats in the House of Lords

To become law, Bills must be approved by both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. No party has an absolute majority in the Lords and the atmosphere is less partisan. As a result the Government is more likely to be defeated in the House of Lords than in the House of Commons. The House of Lords has shown a marked increase in rebelliousness against the House of Commons and the Government of the day since 1997, although this has not reached the number of defeats seen in 1975-76.

Government defeats in the House of Lords, 1975-76 to 2007-08



The data on which the tables above are based are in the following table:

Table 34: Government defeats in the House of Lords by Session, 1975-76 to 2007-08

Session	Government	Number of defeats*
1975-76	Labour	126
1976-77		25
1977-78		78
1978-79		11
1979-80	Conservative	15
1980-81		18
1981-82		7
1982-83		5
1983-84	Conservative	20
1984-85		17
1985-86		22
1986-87		3
1987-88	Conservative	17
1988-89		12
1989-90		20
1990-91		17
1991-92		6
1992-93	Conservative	19
1993-94		16
1994-95		7
1995-96		10
1996-97		10
1997-98	Labour	39
1998-99		31
1999-00		36
2000-01		2
2001-02	Labour	56
2002-03		88
2003-04		64
2004-05		37
2005-06	Labour	62
2006-07		45
2007-08		29

*A Government defeat is defined as a Division in which the tellers on the losing side were Government Whips.

Source: House of Commons Library Parliamentary Information List 3252

After the initial defeat, the House of Commons can reverse an amendment made by the Lords and return the Bill to the Lords. The House of Lords is not obliged to accept that its amendment has been reversed; it sometimes insists on its amendments. There then ensues what is referred to as parliamentary ‘ping pong’, as the Bill shuttles between the Commons and the Lords. The chart below shows the number of times the House of Lords has insisted on its original amendment, that is, how many times the Bill has returned to the Lords and been defeated again, after the initial defeat, since the 1974-79 Parliament.

Commentators have suggested that since the 1999 reforms, when most hereditary peers lost their right to sit in the House of Lords, the remaining peers feel that the Upper House has gained legitimacy and as a result have become increasingly assertive. Research by the

University of London Constitution Unit has shown that the Liberal Democrats have been the key party in bringing about the increase in Government defeats and more insistence on amendments. According to this research, almost one in four Lords amendments end up being accepted by the Government.²⁷

The data on the number of times the Lords have insisted on their amendments are in the following table:

Table 35: Number of instances per Parliament where the House of Lords has insisted on its amendments to a bill, 1974-2008

Parliament	Number of instances(a)			
	1	2	3	4
1974-79	2	1	1	0
1979-83	0	0	0	0
1983-87	1	0	0	0
1987-92	0	1	0	0
1992-97	1	0	0	0
1997-2001	3	1	0	1
2001-2005	12	3	0	2
2005- (b)	10	0	1	1
Total	29	6	2	4

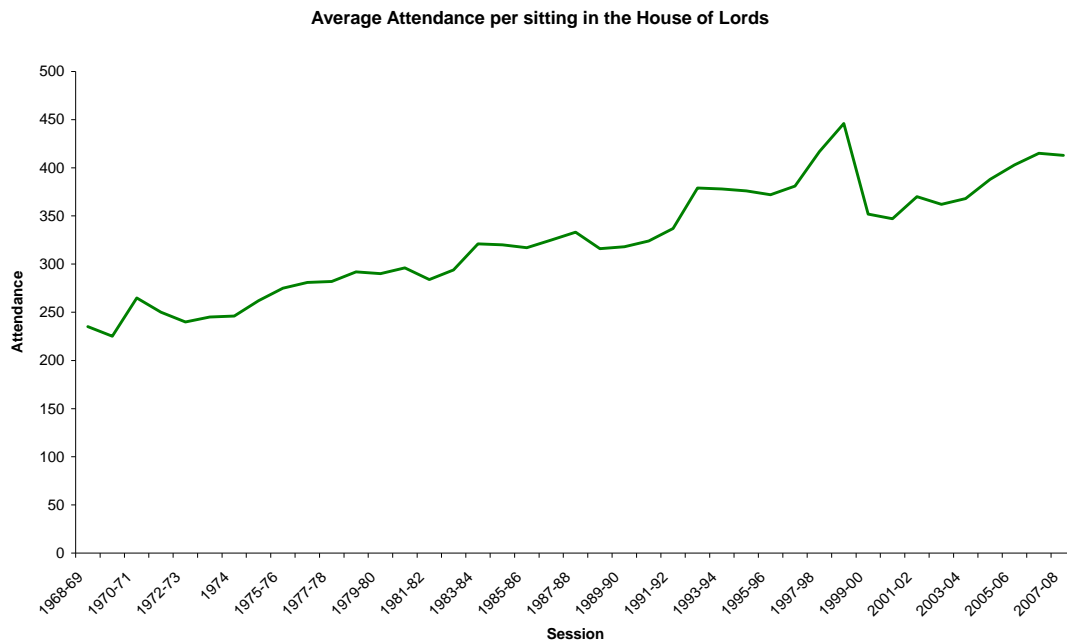
^a i.e. the number of times the bill has returned to the Lords and been defeated again, after the initial defeat.

^b As at 27 August 2008

Source: Figures for 1974-2005 drawn from the Clerk of the Parliaments' evidence to the Joint Committee, HL 265-II, 2005-06, pp EV 97-8. Figures for the 2005- Parliament drawn from the Project House of Lords database, University College London, derived from Hansard and the House of Lords website.

²⁷ Meg Russell and Maria Sciarra, *Why does the Government get defeated in the House of Lords?*, Department of Political Science, University College London

Attendance



On the whole, daily attendance figures for the House of Lords have been rising since 1968-69. This is in spite of reduction in Members of the House following the *House of Lords Act 1999*.

The highest attendance came in 1998-99, when an average of 446 peers attended each sitting. This may have been due to the fact that the 1999 House of Lords Act was passed that Session - a piece of legislation which directly affected the Lords.

In the 2007-08 Session, average daily attendance stood at 413, almost two hundred members more than the average attendance in 1968-69 (235).

Sitting days and hours**Table 36: House of Lords sitting days and hours by Session, 1968-69 to 2007-08**

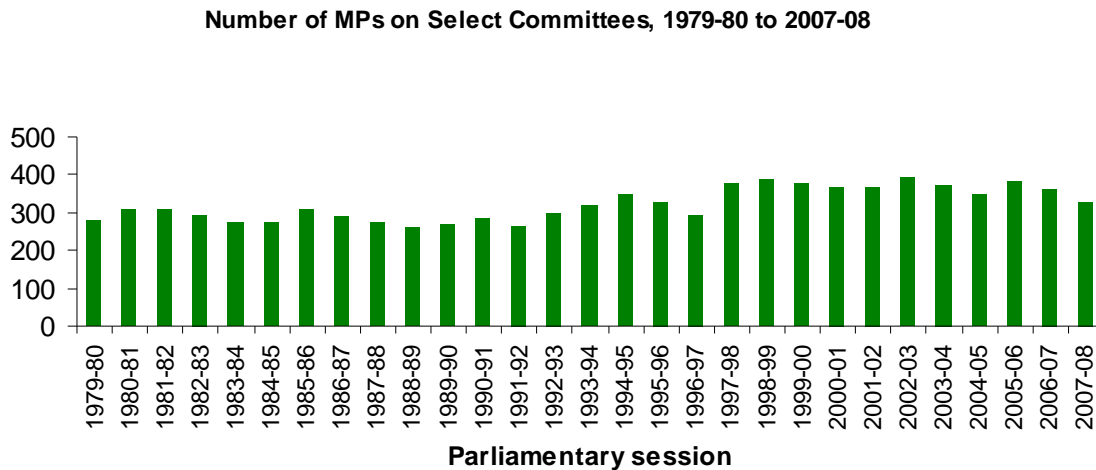
Session	Sitting days per Session	Sitting hours per Session (Hours.Mins)
1968-69	109	547.09
1969-70	83	396.50
1970-71	153	966.02
1971-72	141	813.28
1972-73	128	720.51
1973-74	45	262.58
1974	67	350.04
1974-75	165	930.09
1975-76	155	969.43
1976-77	105	596.23
1977-78	126	737.27
1978-79	59	344.44
1979-80	206	1268.25
1980-81	143	919.53
1981-82	147	930.04
1982-83	94	619.08
1983-84	178	1284.06
1984-85	151	1024.24
1985-86	165	1213.16
1986-87	84	557.26
1987-88	192	1364.04
1988-89	153	1076.51
1989-90	147	1072.29
1990-91	137	885.52
1991-92	74	518.44
1992-93	194	1332.07
1993-94	142	971.45
1994-95	142	904.18
1995-96	136	935.27
1996-97	79	526.45
1997-98	228	1604.23
1998-99	154	1171.28
1999-00	177	1325.04
2000-01	76	508.18
2001-02	200	1395.21
2002-03	174	1262.30
2003-04	157	1094.25
2004-05	63	459.01
2005-06	206	1372.44
2006-07	142	926.19
2007-08	164	1110.09

Source: House of Lords Sessional Business Statistics

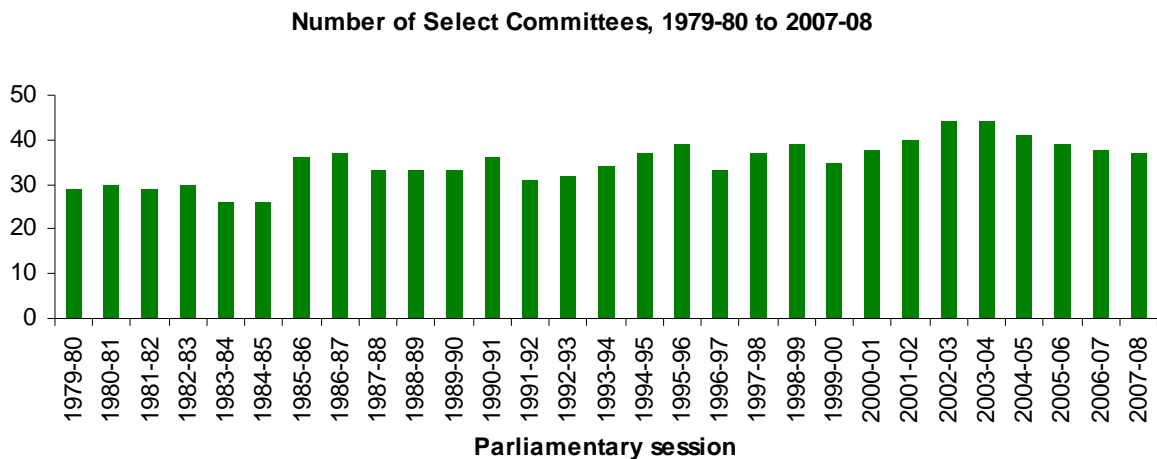
3 Committees

Members on Select Committees

Select Committees were created in 1979. Since then there has been an increase in the number of committees. The number of Members per committee has remained roughly constant. The following chart shows the number of MPs serving on Select Committees, including chairmen:



In the past the number of Select Committees has tended to increase. However recently, there has been a gradual fall in their number:



The data underpinning these charts is in the following table:

Table 37: Select Committee statistics by Session, 1979-80 to 2007-08

Session	Members serving on select committees	Number of select committees (a)	Average Members per committee
1979-80	277	29	9.6
1980-81	309	30	10.3
1981-82	310	29	10.7
1982-83	294	30	9.8
1983-84	276	26	10.6
1984-85	275	26	10.6
1985-86	307	36	8.5
1986-87	289	37	7.8
1987-88	275	33	8.3
1988-89	262	33	7.9
1989-90	272	33	8.2
1990-91	284	36	7.9
1991-92	265	31	8.5
1992-93	300	32	9.4
1993-94	319	34	9.4
1994-95	348	37	9.4
1995-96	327	39	8.4
1996-97	293	33	8.9
1997-98	377	37	10.2
1998-99	388	39	9.9
1999-00	376	35	10.7
2000-01	367	38	9.7
2001-02	368	40	9.2
2002-03	394	44	9.0
2003-04	373	44	8.5
2004-05	348	41	8.5
2005-06	382	39	9.8
2006-07	364	38	9.6
2007-08	326	37	8.8

^aIncludes sub-committees but excludes the Chairmen's Panel, the Court of Referees and the Select Committee on Standing Orders

Source: *House of Commons Sessional Returns*

4 Cost of Parliament

4.1 Spending

Since 2001/02, each House has published its own Resource Accounts.²⁸ For the Commons these are in two parts: the *House of Commons Administration Resource Accounts* and the *House of Commons Members' Resource Accounts*. Before 2001/02, brief accounts were given in the *House of Commons Annual Report*.

For the House of Lords, the *House of Lords Resource Accounts* contain financial information relating to Peers' expenses and general administration costs.

Table 38: Expenditure by both Houses of Parliament by Financial Year, 1990/91 to 2007/08

	£000		
	House of Commons Administration Expenditure	House of Commons Members' Expenditure	House of Lords Expenditure
1990/91	70,543	52,395	
1991/92	82,404	57,645	18,485
1992/93	84,670	67,038	32,217
1993/94	94,162	68,502	36,260
1994/95	98,091	69,467	37,381
1995/96	112,239	72,125	39,846
1996/97	130,149	81,728	38,519
1997/98	145,228	95,819	39,407
1998/99	173,550	86,175	43,240
1999/00	164,583	91,799	45,267
2000/01	214,409	94,322	66,828
2001/02	165,426	120,159	71,449
2002/03	180,006	128,523	85,817
2003/04	178,217	133,902	81,119
2004/05	189,881	141,501	90,766
2005/06	320,559	156,598	106,382
2006/07	210,608	155,990	98,622
2007/08	227,885	159,310	121,500

Sources: *House of Commons Resource Accounts*, *House of Commons Annual Reports*

Data taken from House of Commons Commission Annual Reports up to 1999/2000

Annual Reports for The House of Lords did not begin until 1991/92

The House of Commons Administration's expenditure, which covers spending on those employed directly by the House and the services they provide, was over £227 million in 2007/08. In 2005/06, expenditure rose to £321 million, the highest recorded figure. This was due to the adoption of a new accounting standard, FRS17, which required a one-off technical adjustment for future pension liabilities, adding an extra £116 million to the administrative expenditure in that year.²⁹

²⁸ [House of Commons Resource Accounts](#). [Resource Accounts for the House of Lords](#)

²⁹ [Twenty-eight report of the House of Commons Commission](#)

House of Commons Members' expenditure, which covers spending on MPs' salaries, Members' staff, expenses and allowances, totalled over £159 million in 2007/08. This figure was more than three times the £52 million spent in 1990/91.

House of Lords expenditure has almost doubled between 2000/01 to 2007/08, rising from just under £67 million to over £121 million.

Expenditure in each of the Commons accounts is higher than the expenditure in the Lords. This is due to a number of factors. For instance, peers receive only allowances and expenses, whereas MPs receive these and a full-time annual salary. There is also more staff working for or in the House of Commons than there are in the House of Lords.

4.2 MPs' and Peers' pay and allowances

Members' salaries

Table 39: Annual salaries of Members since 1911 (a)

Date	Salary	Apr 2009 prices (1974 = 100)
August 1911	£400	£35,079
October 1931	£360	£18,258
July 1934	£380	£20,248
July 1935	£400	£21,180
June 1937	£600	£30,430
April 1946	£1,000	£31,181
May 1954 (b)	£1,250	£25,730
July 1957	£1,750	£31,149
October 1964	£3,250	£48,600
January 1972	£4,500	£45,700
June 1975	£5,750	£35,309
June 1976	£6,062	£32,715
June 1977	£6,270	£28,751
June 1978	£6,897	£29,445
June 1979	£9,450	£36,229
June 1980	£11,750	£37,231
June 1981	£13,950	£39,704
June 1982	£14,910	£38,875
June 1983	£15,308	£38,506
1 Jan 1984	£16,106	£39,579
1 Jan 1985	£16,904	£39,554
1 Jan 1986	£17,702	£39,250
1 Jan 1987	£18,500	£39,481
1 Jan 1988	£22,548	£46,584
1 Jan 1989	£24,107	£46,348
1 Jan 1990	£26,701	£47,687
1 Jan 1991	£28,970	£47,488
1 Jan 1992	£30,854	£48,562
1 Jan 1993	£30,854	£47,750
1 Jan 1994	£31,687	£47,860
1 Jan 1995	£33,189	£48,510
1 Jan 1996	£34,085	£48,432
1 July 1996	£43,000	£60,216
1 April 1997	£43,860	£59,886
1 April 1998	£45,066	£59,144
1 April 1999	£47,008	£60,727
1 April 2000	£48,371	£60,691
1 April 2001	£49,822	£61,422
20 June 2001	£51,822	£63,414
1 April 2002	£55,118	£66,951
1 April 2003	£56,358	£66,379
1 April 2004	£57,485	£66,061
1 April 2005	£59,095	£65,818
1 April 2006	£59,686	£64,822
1 Nov 2006	£60,277	£63,970
1 Apr 2007	£61,181	£63,567
1 Nov 2007	£61,820	£62,911
1 Apr 2008	£63,291	£63,119
1 Apr 2009	£64,766	£65,348

Sources: House of Commons Information Office, *Members' Pay, Pensions and Allowances*; ONS

(a) Staged increases are not shown in this table

(b) Including sessional allowance. From May 1954 to July 1957 an allowance of £2 for each day the House sat (except Fridays) was paid to Members. The figure here is based on the average number of sitting days in that period.

(c) inflated using Retail Price Index

Pay for MPs were first introduced in 1911 by the then Liberal Government, and set at a rate of £400 per annum. This rate remained, notwithstanding temporary reductions in 1931 and 1934 due to the economic crisis, up until 1946, when MPs pay was increased to £1,000 per year.

Up until 1971, nothing but ad hoc reviews of Members' salaries took place. That year the Top Salaries Review Body was set up, with a provision to consider and advise on the pay of MPs. This later became the Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB).

An SSRB review of Members' remuneration in 1996 concluded that it should be raised to £43,000 per annum, which The House agreed to. This saw MPs pay jump by almost £9,000 from the previous year. Since then, pay has risen steadily to where it stands at April 2009 - £64,766.

Regular reviews of MPs pay and allowances have been conducted since the 1996 review: in 2001, 2004 and 2007.³⁰

Members' allowances

Members' allowances and expenses have come under increasing scrutiny. This section seeks to define and differentiate Members' expenses and offer trend data where possible.

The **Communications Allowance** was introduced by the House on 28 March 2007, and is designed to assist Members with expenditure incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily in communicating with the public on parliamentary business. Originally for the 2007/08 Financial Year, the maximum level was set at £10,000. For the 2008/09 and 2009/10 Financial Year it is set at £10,400 per annum.³¹

The **Additional Costs Allowance** (ACA) was introduced in 1972 to cover additional costs to Members staying either in London or their constituency, when engaged on parliamentary duties. It has been replaced for 2009/10 by the **Personal Additional Accommodation Expenditure** (PAAE) allowance, with a threshold of £24,222 for that year.³²

Overleaf is an illustration of the change in the maximum limit of this allowance:

³⁰ SN/PC/05075, *Members' pay and allowances – a brief history*

³¹ Research Paper 09/60, *Members' Allowances*, page 5

³² *Ibid*

Table 40: Additional Costs Allowance- maximum rate 1972 to 2009

Date	Allowance
Jan 1972	£187.50
Apr 1972	£750.00
Apr 1973	£750.00
Apr 1974	£950.00
Apr 1975	£1,639
Apr 1976	£1,982
Apr 1977	£2,410
Apr 1978	£2,918
Apr 1979	£3,661
Apr 1980	£4,558
Apr 1981	£5,105
Apr 1982	£5,518
Apr 1983	£6,000
Apr 1984	£6,518
Apr 1985	£7,132
Apr 1986	£7,855
Apr 1987	£8,674
Apr 1988	£9,298
Apr 1989	£9,914
Apr 1990	£10,571
Apr 1991	£10,786
Apr 1992	£10,901
Apr 1993	£10,958
Jan 1994	£11,068
Apr 1994	£11,268
Apr 1995	£11,661
Apr 1996	£11,976
Apr 1997	£12,287
Apr 1998	£12,717
Apr 1999	£12,984
Apr 2000	£13,322
Apr 2001	£19,469
Apr 2002	£19,722
Apr 2003	£20,333
Apr 2004	£20,902
Apr 2005	£21,634
Apr 2006	£22,110
Apr 2007	£23,083
Apr 2008	£24,006
Apr 2009	£24,222

Source: SN/PC/04651, *Additional Cost Allowance*

For more information, see the standard note *Additional Costs Allowance*.³³

A **Temporary Secretarial Allowance (TSA)** is made available to meet the extra cost of obtaining temporary secretarial/research assistance, while a salaried Members' staff is absent from work through paid sickness, maternity or adoption leave. The amount available is dependent on the amount of the absent employee's salary for the following periods

- *Maternity*: 26 times the gross total of the gross weekly pay and Employers' National Insurance contributions of the absent employee. TSA does not cover maternity leave in excess of the contractual 26 weeks.
- *Adoption*: As maternity. TSA does not cover leave in excess of the 26 weeks contractual paid leave.
- *Sickness*: In any four year period, twelve times the gross monthly salary of the employee concerned.

³³ SN/PC/04641, *Additional Costs Allowance*

The **Winding Up Allowance** is available to meet the costs of completing constituency and parliamentary business undertaken by or on behalf of a former Member upon their death or retirement. The allowance is equal to one third of the current level of the sum of the Staffing Allowances and Incidental Expenses Provision. Its maximum level at the start of the 2008/09 tax year was £40,799.

A **Resettlement Grant** is payable to any Member who ceases to be an MP at a General Election, in order to assist with the cost of adjusting to non-parliamentary life. The amount is based on age and length of service, and varies between 50 per cent and 100 per cent of the annual salary payable to a Member of Parliament at the time of dissolution.

The **London Supplement** is available to any Member whose constituency is within inner London. It is paid in addition to the salary. The 2008/09 rate is £2,916. From 1 April 2009 the London Supplement will be replaced by a **London Costs Allowance** of £7,500.

Members representing outer London constituencies could choose to take either London Supplement or the Additional Costs Allowance.

The **General Services budget** provides relevant training for Members and their staff and appropriate insurance. It also provides exceptional expenses for Members who represent constituencies with particular problems, and reasonable adjustments to working conditions and equipment for Members with particular needs.

The **Office Costs Allowance** was the main source of reimbursement for Members' expenses prior to the 2001 review on Members' pay and allowances. Up until March 2003, the Office Costs Allowance covered expenses such as secretarial assistance, general office expenses and the employment of research assistants. Below is a table and chart showing the changes in the Office Costs Allowance from 1969 to 2002:

Table 41: Maximum Office Costs Allowance 1969 to 2002

Date	Allowance
Oct 1969	£500
Jan 1972	£1,000
Aug 1974	£1,750
Jun 1975	£3,200
Jun 1976	£3,512
Jun 1977	£3,687
Jun 1978	£4,200
Jun 1979	£4,600
Feb 1980	£6,750
Aug 1980	£8,000
Jun 1981	£8,480
Jun 1982	£8,820
Jul 1983	£11,364
Apr 1984 (a)	£12,437
Apr 1985	£13,211
Apr 1986	£20,140
Apr 1987	£21,302
Apr 1988	£22,588
Apr 1989	£24,903
Apr 1990	£27,166
Apr 1991	£28,986
Apr 1992	£39,960
Apr 1993	£40,380
Apr 1994	£41,308
Apr 1995	£42,754
Apr 1996 (b)	£43,908
Apr 1996 (c)	£46,364
Apr 1997	£47,568
Apr 1998	£49,232
Apr 1999	£50,264
Apr 2000	£51,572
Apr 2001	£52,760
Jun 2001	£52,760
Apr 2002 (d)	£53,446

(a) On 20 July 1984 the House decided by resolution that the allowance be uprated from 1 April each year by the increase in the maximum point of the pay scale (excluding allowances and overtime) for a senior personal secretary in the Civil Service in receipt of Inner London weighting. However, on 16 July 1986 the House decided to reject the Government recommendation of a 6% increase in Secretarial/Research Allowances, and instead voted for an amendment which raised the base figure for allowances in 1986-87 by over 40%. On 21 July 1987 the allowance became known as the Office Costs Allowance. The allowance is revised from 1 April each year, though the actual amount cannot generally be calculated until late April. On 25 July 1991, the Leader of the House, Rt Hon John MacGregor, asked the Top Salaries Review Body to undertake a review of the whole subject of the Office Costs Allowances. The TSRB reported in July 1992, following which the Government recommended an increase in the OCA of just over £4,000, to be assessed on a quarterly basis in the future. On 14 July 1992, however, the House rejected this and voted instead in favour of an increase of 38%, also to be assessed quarterly. On 13 July 1994, the House voted for a 2.3% increase in the allowance limit effective from 1 April 1994.

(b) As first paid

(c) Increased following a resolution

(d) Office Cost Allowance was abolished in April 2003. Members who served in the previous Parliament could opt to retain their OCA entitlement until then or transfer to the Staffing Allowance as set out above.

The **Staffing Allowance** was introduced in June 2001 to replace the old Office Costs Allowance, which was abolished in a transitional period ending 31 March 2003. The Staffing Allowance funds the salaries of Members' staff, together with pension contributions. The allowance is up rated in accordance with movements in the Average Earnings Index. From 1 April 2009, it will become known as the **Staffing Expenditure**.

Below is a table outlining changes in the Staffing Allowance:

Table 42: Staffing Allowance since June 2001

Date	Maximum
Jun 2001	£70,000
Apr 2002	£72,310
Apr 2003	£74,985
Apr 2004	£77,534
Apr 2005	£84,081
Apr 2006	£87,276
Apr 2007	£90,505
Apr 2008	£90,854
Apr 2009	£103,812

Source: House of Commons Information Office Factsheet: Members' pay, pensions and allowances

The **Incidental Expenses Allowance** came about after the change to the Office Costs Allowance in 2001. It is available "to meet any other expenditure which Members may incur wholly necessarily and exclusively in discharging their duties as Members"³⁴ not covered by other allowances. It was replaced by the **Administrative and Office Expenditure (AOE)** allowance for 2009/10. For that year, a maximum of £22,393 can be claimed in AOE costs

The **Motor Mileage Allowance (MMA)** reimburses Members of the Commons and the Lords for the cost of travel by car between Westminster and their constituency, homes and other approved journeys on parliamentary business. The current rates are 40 pence per mile for the first 10,000 miles and 25 pence per mile thereafter. The Motorcycle Allowance was introduced on the 29 January 2004. It reimburses Members for journeys by motorcycle. The current rate is 24 pence per mile. The Bicycle Allowance was introduced in 1998 and reimburses Members for journeys by bicycle. Originally it was up rated annually by the percentage increase in the RPI, but since 2004 the rate has been set by the Inland Revenue up until 2005, and since then Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). The current rate is 20 pence per mile.

Ministerial salaries

Ministers who are currently in the House of Commons also receive their salary as a MP. Prior to July 1996, they received a reduced parliamentary salary on the grounds that ministerial office impinged on the individual's ability to undertake the full range of an MP's parliamentary duties. After a SSRB report recommended that Ministers should receive a full parliamentary salary,³⁵ the House agreed to accept it.³⁶ Peers with ministerial duties receive full remuneration as well as their allowances, due to not being paid a salary for sitting in the Lords.

³⁴ HC Deb c421, 5 July 2001

³⁵ Review of Parliamentary Pay and Allowances, Cm 3330, July 1996

³⁶ HC Deb 10 July 1996 c488

Table 43: Salary entitlement for Ministers, 1965 to 2009

	Cabinet Ministers			Ministers of State		Parliamentary Undersecretaries	
	Prime Minister	Commons	Lords	Commons	Lords	Commons	Lords
Apr 1965	£14,000	£8,500	£8,500	£5,625	£5,625	£3,750	£3,750
Apr 1972	£20,000	£13,000	£13,000	£7,500	£7,500	£5,500	£5,500
Jun 1976	£20,000	£13,000	£13,000	£7,500	£7,500	£5,500	£5,500
Jun 1977	£20,000	£13,000	£13,000	£7,500	£7,500	£5,500	£6,020
Jul 1978	£22,000	£14,300	£14,300	£8,250	£8,822	£6,050	£6,622
Jul 1979	£33,000	£19,650	£19,650	£12,625	£12,911	£9,525	£9,811
Jul 1980	£34,650	£23,500	£23,500	£16,250	£16,400	£12,350	£12,500
Jun 1981	£36,725	£27,825	£27,825	£19,775	£23,275	£15,100	£18,600
Jun 1982	£38,200	£28,950	£28,950	£20,575	£24,200	£15,700	£19,350
Jul 1983	£38,987	£29,367	£30,110	£20,867	£25,350	£15,917	£20,390
Jan 1984	£40,424	£30,304	£31,680	£21,364	£26,670	£16,154	£21,450
Jan 1985	£41,891	£31,271	£33,260	£21,881	£28,000	£16,411	£22,520
Jan 1986	£43,328	£32,208	£34,820	£22,378	£29,320	£16,648	£23,580
Jan 1987	£44,775	£33,145	£36,390	£22,875	£30,640	£16,885	£24,640
Jan 1988	£45,787	£34,157	£40,438	£23,887	£34,688	£17,897	£28,688
Jan 1989	£46,109	£34,479	£41,997	£24,209	£37,047	£18,219	£30,647
Jan 1990	£46,750	£35,120	£44,591	£24,850	£39,641	£18,860	£33,241
Jan 1991	£50,724	£38,105	£48,381	£26,962	£43,010	£20,463	£36,066
Jan 1992	£53,007	£39,820	£50,558	£28,175	£44,945	£21,384	£37,689
Jan 1994	£54,438	£40,895	£52,260	£28,936	£46,333	£21,961	£38,894
Jan 1995	£57,018	£42,834	£55,329	£30,307	£48,835	£23,002	£41,065
Jan 1996	£58,557	£43,991	£57,161	£31,125	£50,328	£23,623	£42,361
Jul 1996	£58,557	£43,991	£58,876	£31,125	£51,838	£23,623	£43,632
May 1997	£100,000	£60,000	£77,963	£31,125	£51,838	£23,623	£43,632
Apr 1998	£102,750	£61,650	£80,107	£31,981	£53,264	£24,273	£44,832
Apr 1999	£107,179	£64,307	£83,560	£33,359	£64,426	£25,319	£55,631
Apr 2000	£110,287	£66,172	£85,983	£34,326	£66,294	£26,053	£57,244
Apr 2001	£113,596	£68,157	£88,562	£35,356	£68,283	£26,835	£58,961
Apr 2002	£116,436	£69,861	£94,826	£36,240	£74,040	£27,506	£64,485
Apr 2003	£119,056	£71,433	£96,960	£37,055	£75,506	£28,125	£65,936
Apr 2004	£121,437	£72,862	£98,899	£37,796	£77,220	£28,688	£67,255
Apr 2005	£124,837	£74,902	£101,668	£38,854	£79,382	£29,491	£69,138
Apr 2006	£126,085	£75,651	£102,685	£39,243	£80,176	£29,786	£69,829
Nov 2006	£127,334	£76,400	£103,701	£39,631	£80,970	£30,081	£70,521
Apr 2007	£128,174	£76,904	£104,386	£39,893	£81,504	£30,280	£70,986
Nov 2007	£130,594	£78,356	£106,356	£40,646	£83,043	£30,851	£72,326
Nov 2008	£130,959	£78,575	£106,653	£40,759	£83,275	£30,937	£72,529
Apr 2009	£132,923	£79,754	£108,253	£41,370	£84,524	£31,401	£73,617

Source: House of Commons Information Office, *Ministerial Salaries*, March 2008

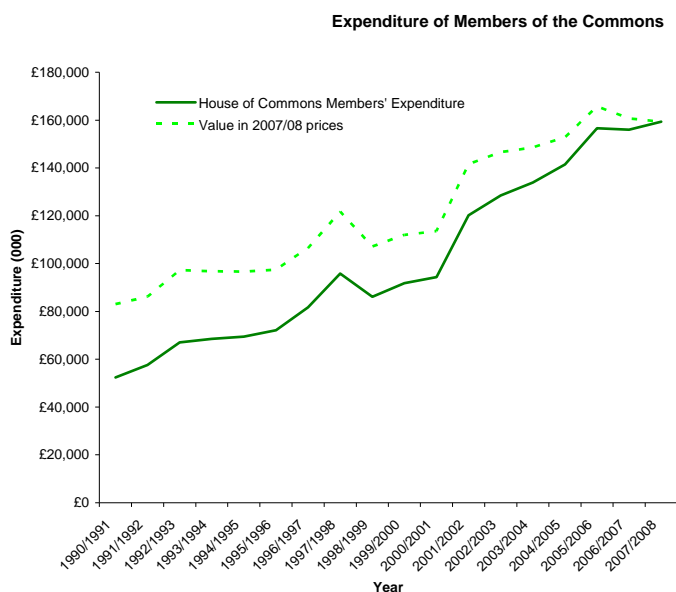
Overall Members' cost

Below is a table showing Members' expenditure, in total and per Member, as well as a graph showing total Members' expenditure. It provides an estimate of general costs associated with supporting Members of the House of Commons, allowing them to perform their duties in constituencies and Parliament. This includes Members' salaries, pension payments, reimbursement of expenses, insurance payments and the provision of IT training and equipment for Members and their staff. It also takes into account financial assistance given to opposition parties to perform their duties, as well as providing the Exchequer contribution to the Members' fund:

Table 44: House of Commons – Members' Expenditure, 1990/91 to 2007/08

	£000			
	House of Commons Members' Expenditure	Value in 2007/08 prices	Expenditure per Member	Expenditure per Member in 2007/08 prices
1990/91	52,395	83,036	81	128
1991/92	57,645	86,248	89	133
1992/93	67,038	97,300	103	149
1993/94	68,502	96,777	105	149
1994/95	69,467	96,627	107	148
1995/96	72,125	97,502	111	150
1996/97	81,728	106,544	126	164
1997/98	95,819	121,720	145	185
1998/99	86,175	107,188	131	163
1999/00	91,799	111,983	139	170
2000/01	94,322	113,571	143	172
2001/02	120,159	141,525	182	215
2002/03	128,523	146,649	195	223
2003/04	133,902	148,552	203	225
2004/05	141,501	152,827	215	232
2005/06	156,598	165,738	242	257
2006/07	155,990	160,765	241	249
2007/08	159,310	159,310	247	247

Sources: House of Commons Resource Accounts, House of Commons Annual Reports
HM Treasury



Expenditure for MPs has increased gradually over the previous eight parliamentary sessions, at an average rate of seven per cent a year. In real terms, the average increase has been 4.2 per cent a year.

In real terms, the total amount spent per Member peaked at over a quarter of a million pounds in 2005/06, but it has since fallen to £247,000.

Peers' allowances

Unlike MPs, peers do not receive a salary (they may draw a salary if they hold office as a minister or as an official in the Lords).³⁷ They are instead able to claim a number of allowances. More detail on the Lords Members' Reimbursement Allowance scheme can be found in their *general guide*.³⁸

Below is a table showing allowance rates for the Lords for 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08:

Table 45: Main Peers' Allowances, current summary 2005-2010

Backbench Peers		1 Aug 05 - 31 Jul 06	1 Aug 06 - 31 Jul 07	1 Aug 07 - 31 Jul 08	1 Aug 08 - 31 Jul 09	1 Aug 09 - 31 Jul 10
Subsistence	Day	£77.00	£79.50	£82.50	£86.50	£86.50
	Overnight	£154.50	£159.50	£165.50	£174.00	£174.00
Per day the House sits (usually about 150 days per year)						
Office Costs		£67.00	£69.00	£71.50	£75.00	£75.00
Per sitting day and for up to 40 additional days per year						
Travel						
	Spouse/civil partner/children's expenses	Six return journeys for parliamentary occasions each year				
Lord Ministers and paid office holders						
	Secretarial Allowance	£5,025.50	£5,192.00	£5,389.00	£5,658.00	£5,658.00
	Family travel expenses	Expenses for up to 15 return journeys per calendar year for spouses and children aged under 18				

Source: Research Paper 08/31, *Parliamentary pay, pensions and allowances*

4.3 Members' staff

At the end of the Financial Year 2007/08 there was 2,694 Members' staff on the payroll, as well as a number of volunteers and interns working in Westminster or constituency offices.³⁹ The following table shows the number of Members and Members' staff per Session:

³⁷ Figures for Ministerial salaries are to be found earlier on in this document.

³⁸ [House of Lords Members' Reimbursement Allowance Scheme – A General Guide](#)

³⁹ *Thirtieth Report of the House of Commons' Commission*, Financial Year 2007/08.

Table 46: Number of Members and their staff, 1997-98 to 2007-08

	Members	Members' Staff	Average staff per MP
1997-98	659	1,753	2.66
1998-99	659	1,849	2.81
1999-00	659	1,867	2.83
2000-01	659	1,850	2.81
2001-02	659	2,179	3.31
2002-03	659	2,280	3.46
2003-04	659	2,446	3.71
2004-05	659	2,584	3.92
2005-06	646	2,577	3.99
2006-07	646	2,493	3.86
2007-08	646	2,694	4.17

Source: SN/PC/02411, *Total number of MPs, Peers and Staff*

*House of Lords Act 1999

**Does not include Peers' staff

There has been a gradual increase in the number of staff per Member in the last 10 years, in spite of the reduction of the number of MPs from 659 to 646 in 2005-06.

4.4 Parliamentary staff

Below is a table showing the number of people working in Parliament and for MPs.

Table 47: Number of people working in Parliament, 1997/98-2007/08

	Members	Members' Staff	Commons Staff	Peers**	Lords' Staff
1997-98	659	1,753	1,428	1,221	332
1998-99	659	1,849	1,402	1,290	326
1999-00	659	1,867	1,411	1290 / 669*	564
2000-01	659	1,850	1,377	683	377
2001-02	659	2,179	1,430	708	413
2002-03	659	2,280	1,477	691	426
2003-04	659	2,446	1,517	708	452
2004-05	659	2,584	1,554	675	478
2005-06	646	2,577	1,553	705	454
2006-07	646	2,493	1,606	738	452
2007-08	646	2,694	1,696	733	490

Source: SN/PC/02411, *Total number of MPs, Peers and Staff*

*House of Lords Act 1999

**Does not include Peers' staff

The *House of Commons Administration Resource Accounts*⁴⁰ provide an estimate of the general costs associated with the House of Commons service (for example stationery, printing, broadcasting and security). On top of this, they cover the salaries of staff of the House of Commons and the Office of the Speaker, as well as some travel expenses for MPs in connection with select committees, delegations and international parliamentary services. The accounts also include grants-in-aid paid to the History of Parliament Trust and the

⁴⁰ Commons Publications, [House of Commons Resource Accounts](#)

Association of Former Members of Parliament. The House of Lords Resource Accounts, provide data for the salaries of Lords' office staff.

Below is a table showing the staffing costs of both Houses of Parliament. It shows the costs of staff who work for the Houses, such as cleaners, librarians, clerks and catering staff:

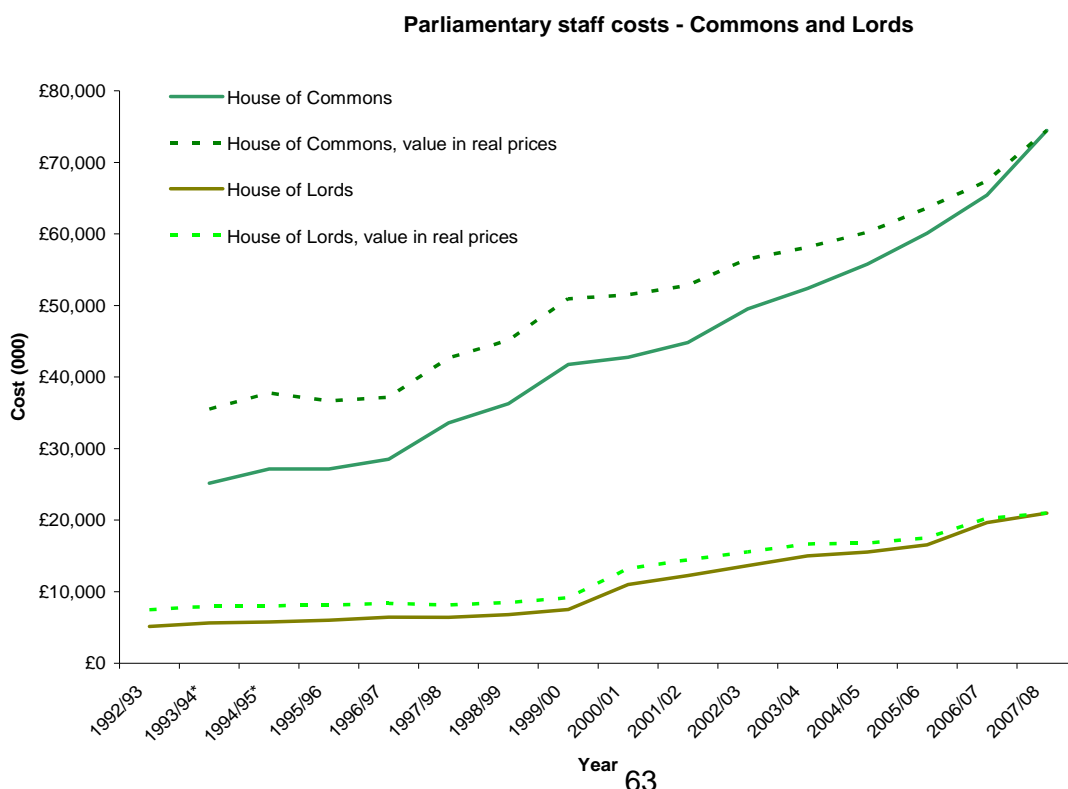
Table 48: Parliamentary staff costs – Commons and Lords, 1992/93-2007/08

	House of Commons (000)	Value in 2007/08 prices (000)	House of Lords (000)	Value in 2007/08 prices (000)
1992/93			£5,149	£7,473
1993/94*	£25,136	£35,511	£5,639	£7,967
1994/95*	£27,146	£37,759	£5,761	£8,013
1995/96	£27,124	£36,667	£6,005	£8,118
1996/97	£28,513	£37,171	£6,420	£8,369
1997/98	£33,598	£42,680	£6,408	£8,140
1998/99	£36,259	£45,101	£6,814	£8,476
1999/00	£41,753	£50,933	£7,504	£9,154
2000/01	£42,757	£51,483	£10,999	£13,244
2001/02	£44,822	£52,792	£12,264	£14,445
2002/03	£49,522	£56,506	£13,627	£15,549
2003/04	£52,387	£58,119	£15,022	£16,666
2004/05	£55,760	£60,223	£15,535	£16,778
2005/06	£60,099	£63,607	£16,547	£17,513
2006/07	£65,420	£67,422	£19,651	£20,252
2007/08	£74,451	£74,451	£20,976	£20,976

Source: House of Commons Resource Accounts, House of Commons Commission Annual Reports

Note: Figures from 1995/96 to 2000/01 are unaudited

* House of Commons figures for these years are estimates

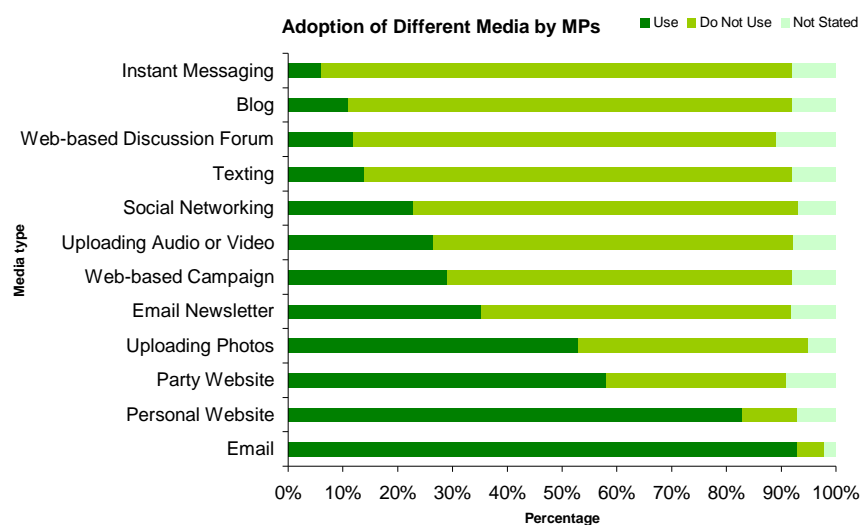


5 Parliament communicating with the public

5.1 Internet

Parliament’s website offers the public access to a growing selection of information about both Houses. In 2008, the website recorded almost 50.3million hits and over 6.5million visitors.

MPs increasingly use electronic tools to communicate with their constituents and other people concerned with politics in Britain, but some forms of communication are more popular than others. Research conducted by the Hansard Society shows that, of the sample of MPs, 90% use email and more than 80% have a personal website, while less than a quarter use social networking, and only about one in ten MPs blog.⁴¹ The graph below shows the adoption of different media by MPs.



Source: Hansard Society, *MPs Online: Connecting With Constituents*

Although nearly all MPs reported using email (see previous chart), there has only been a 37% increase in its adoption by MPs in the last three years and last year saw only a 2 per cent rise in the number of MPs using email. This would suggest that the market for MPs’ use of email is saturated: nearly all MPs in the present Parliament who are going to use email already use it.

In contrast, the number of MPs taking up blogging and social networking is relatively low. However, these technologies have seen significant increases in use, compared to just a handful of MPs a few years ago. This suggests that social networking and blogging could become important ways for Members to communicate with the public in the near future.

⁴¹ Hansard Society: *MPs Online: Connecting with Constituents*, 2009

5.2 Television

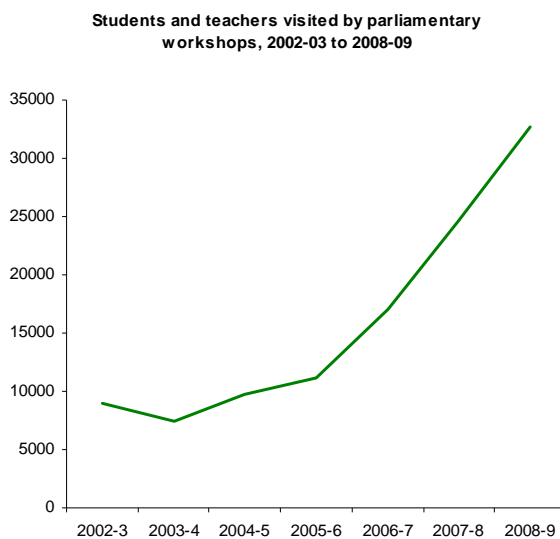
Since 1998, BBC Parliament has shown live and recorded coverage of the House of Commons and House of Lords. It also broadcasts Select Committees, the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly.⁴² The channel also broadcasts reports from the European Parliament and the yearly party conferences of the main political parties and the TUC. It broadcasts 24 hours a day.

Viewing figures for BBC Parliament have been low. In every month since September 2003 up to April 2009, data produced by The Broadcasters Audience Research Board shows that BBC Parliament has had a television audience share between 0 and 0.05%. In the same period, the average weekly viewing per person has been between zero seconds and half a minute.⁴³

5.3 Education and Visits

Parliament's education service works with Members of both Houses and schools in order to support young people develop their understanding of the workings of Parliament. They offer a range of visiting programmes and run an outreach program, working with teachers, students and putting on workshops away from Westminster.⁴⁴

Below is a chart showing the number of students visited by the education centre during workshop visits over the past few years. Please note that these figures also include a small number of teachers:



Source: Education Centre

After an initial fall and steady increase up until 2005-06, the number of students visited by the education centre has risen dramatically ever since.

⁴² http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/bbc_parliament/default.stm

⁴³ BARB Monthly Multi-Channel Viewing Summary

⁴⁴ Education Centre, UK Parliament

Every year around 1 million people visit Parliament. They come to meet MPs or Peers, watch debates, attend a committee meeting or to see the Palace of Westminster on a tour. Table 49 shows the number of visitors to Parliament per month since 2006.

Table 49: Parliamentary visitors, 2006 to 2009

	2006	2007	2008	2009
January	57,425	73,703	74,738	61,378
February	78,710	70,533	82,767	64,695
March	87,076	82,851	8,943	
April	49,928	66,533	85,233	
May	84,259	91,798	85,963	
June	102,896	104,410	105,960	
July	108,080	107,206	97,324	
August	60,082	93,681	67,363	
September	86,347	83,405	73,191	
October	86,935	93,195	98,190	
November	89,843	91,228	83,951	
December	39,009	56,606	54,666	
Calendar year	930,590	1,015,149	918,289	126,073

Source: Tours Office - statistics for all entrances

Over the years, the months of June and July have been the busiest, being the only months with over 100,000 visitors at a time. Attendances in June have gradually increased, whereas in contrast July visitations have decreased— by 0.8% in 2007 and by 9.2% in 2008. The figures for 2009 show a fall in attendance of more than 13,000 in January and over 18,000 in February on the previous year.

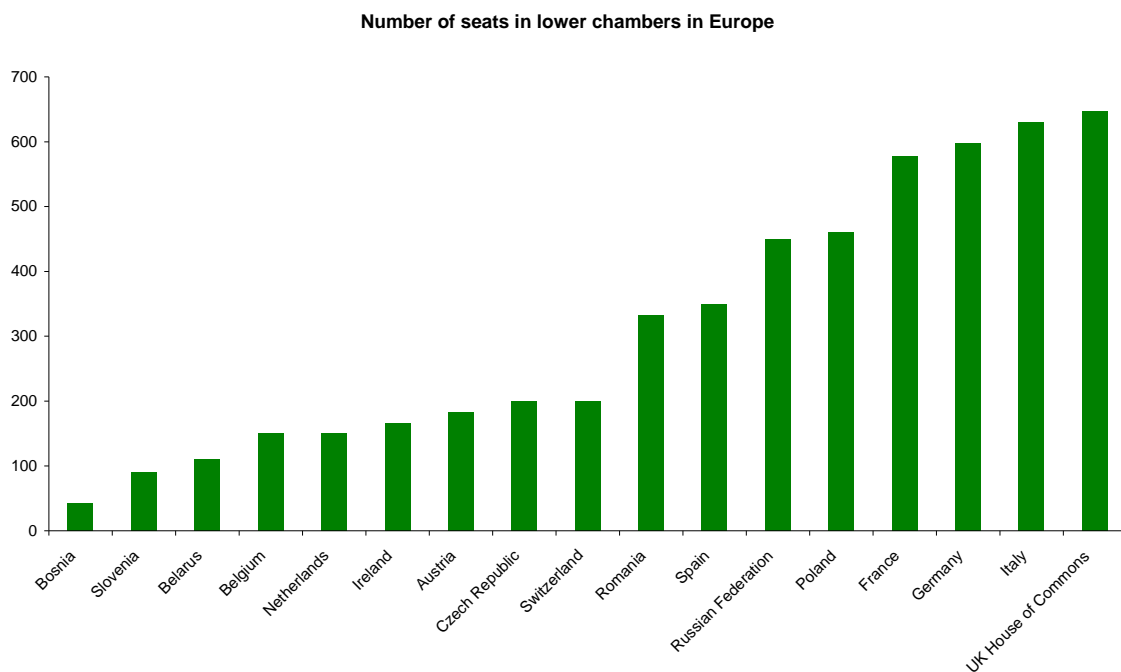
6 International comparisons

6.1 Structure (bicameral/unitary)

The United Kingdom Parliament is bicameral, having two chambers: the House of Commons and the House of Lords. According to the Inter-parliamentary Union, unicameral parliaments are more popular across the world, with 114 or 60% of the total number of national parliaments. There are 77 bicameral parliaments, or 40%.⁴⁵

6.2 Size

A comparison of the number of seats in the two chambers of the UK Parliament shows that both are the biggest in Europe. The statutory number of seats (that is, including those that are temporarily vacant) in the House of Commons is the highest in Europe, although not by much.

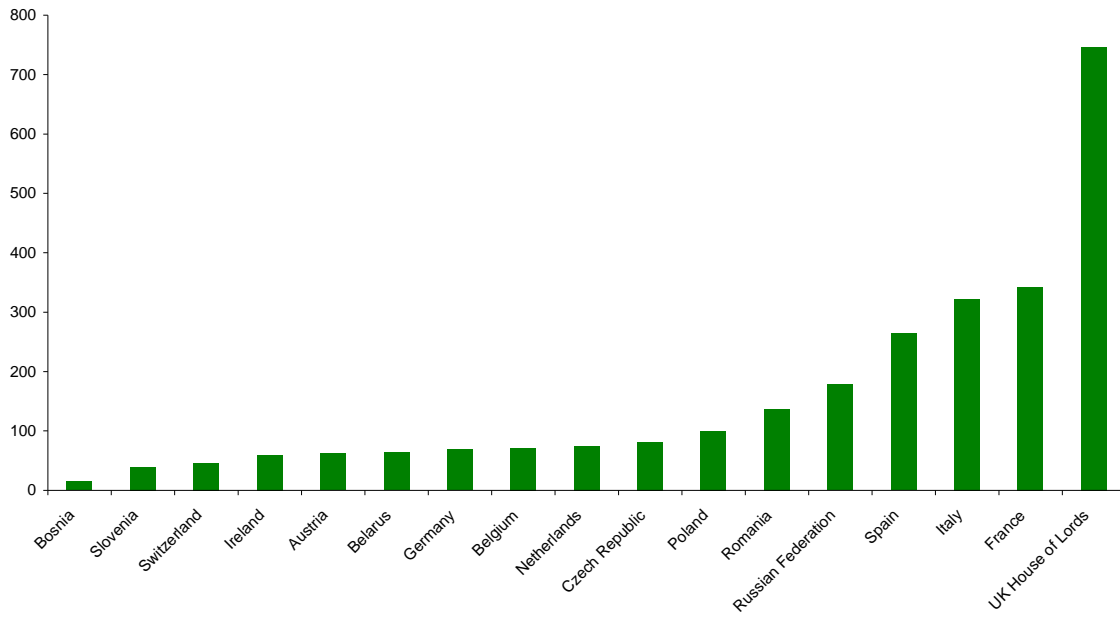


Source: Inter-parliamentary Union

The House of Lords is bigger than comparable upper chambers in Europe, with about twice as many members as its nearest rival, the French Senate.

⁴⁵ Interparliamentary Union, [Parline database](#)

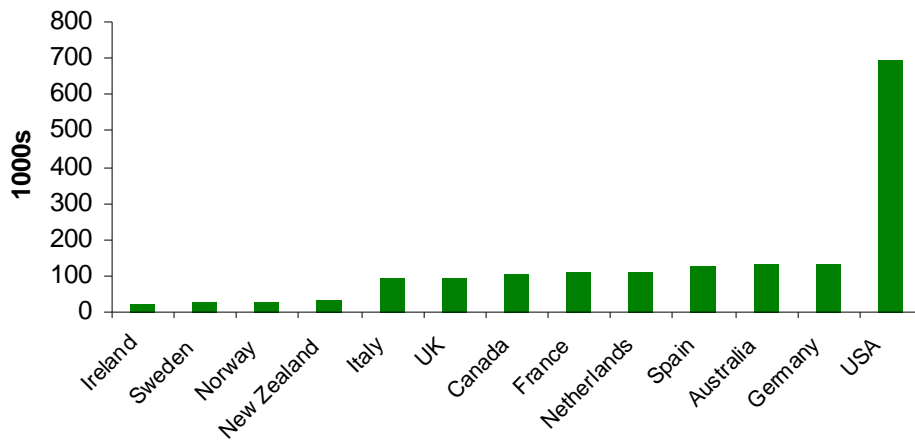
Number of seats in upper chambers in Europe



Source: Inter-parliamentary Union

Another interesting way of looking at the size of parliaments is to compare the number of constituents that each elected member represents.

Population per lower/single chamber Member



Source: Review Body on Senior Salaries, *Review of Parliamentary Pay Pensions and Allowances 2007*, Cm 7170/1

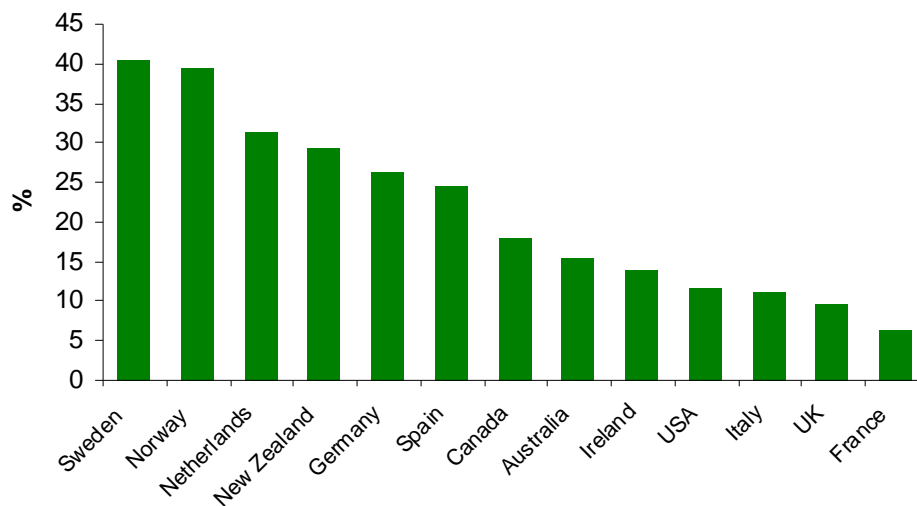
Table 50: Population per lower/single chamber Member in thousands

Country	Population per lower/single chamber Member in thousands
Ireland	24
Sweden	26
Norway	30
New Zealand	33
Italy	94
UK	94
Canada	107
France	111
Netherlands	113
Spain	129
Australia	133
Germany	134
USA	696

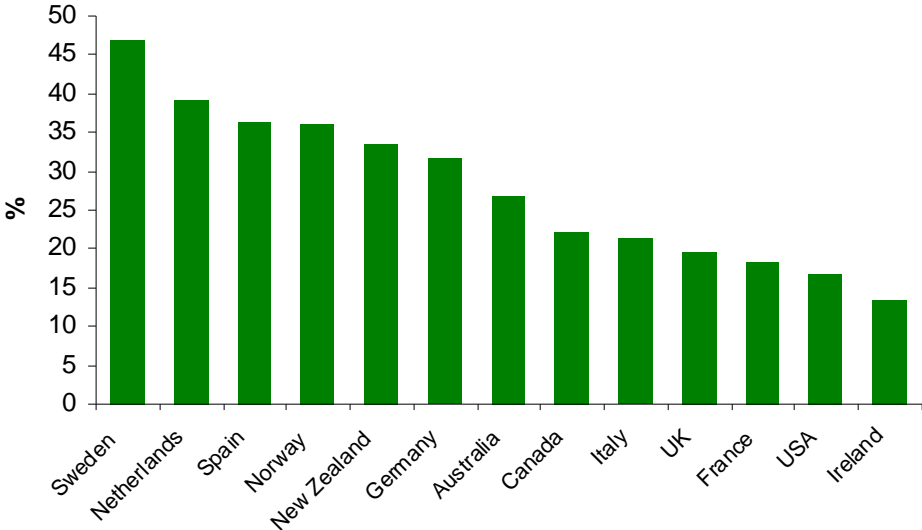
6.3 Gender

As discussed in the chapter on Members of Parliament, the proportion of women MPs in the House of Commons reached some 20% after the 2005 General Election. The number of women elected to other parliaments has also been increasing in recent years. The following two charts show the UK Parliament's position in relation to a selection of 12 comparable countries, firstly in 1997 and secondly in 2008.

Proportion of women members of parliament in 1997



Proportion of women members of parliament in 2008



Source: Inter-parliamentary Union

Between 1997 and 2008 the United Kingdom moved from 12th out of 13 in terms of female representation in parliament to 10th out of 13. Nevertheless, as the table below shows, the overall ranking in the Inter-parliamentary Union’s worldwide ranking fell from 50th to 59th. Sweden also lost its top spot to Rwanda.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ For the full [rankings on women in parliaments](#), and for other election and parliamentary information, see the [Inter-parliamentary Union’s website](#).

Table 51: Number of women members of parliament in 1997 and 2008

Rank ⁱ	Country	Lower or single House				Upper House or Senate			
		Elections	Seats	Women	% W	Elections	Seats	Women	% W
1	Sweden	Sep-94	349	141	40.4	---	---	---	---
2	Norway	Sep-93	165	65	39.4	---	---	---	---
5	Netherlands	May-94	150	47	31.3	---	---	---	---
6	New Zealand	Oct-96	120	35	29.2	---	---	---	---
9	Germany	Oct-94	672	176	26.2	Oct-94	68	13	19.1
14	Spain	Mar-96	350	86	24.6	Mar-96	256	34	13.3
21	Canada	Oct-93	295	53	18	1994	104	24	23.1
27	Australia	Mar-96	148	23	15.5	Mar-96	76	23	30.3
31	Ireland	Nov-92	166	23	13.9	Feb-93	60	8	13.3
41	USA	Nov-96	435	51	11.7	Nov-96	100	9	9
43	Italy	Apr-96	630	70	11.1	Apr-96	326	26	8
50	UK	Apr-92	651	62	9.5	Jan-95	1190	82	6.9
72	France	Mar-93	577	37	6.4	Sep-95	321	18	5.6

ⁱPosition among 177 countries. Information supplied on 1 January 1997.

Rank ⁱⁱ	Country	Lower or single House				Upper House or Senate			
		Elections	Seats*	Women	% W	Elections	Seats*	Women	% W
2	Sweden	Sep-06	349	164	47	---	---	---	---
7	Netherlands	Nov-06	150	59	39.3	May-07	75	26	34.70%
12	Spain	Mar-08	350	127	36.3	Mar-08	263	79	30.00%
13	Norway	Sep-05	169	61	36.1	---	---	---	---
16	New Zealand	Nov-08	122	41	33.6	---	---	---	---
18	Germany	Sep-05	613	194	31.6	N.A.	69	15	21.70%
33	Australia	Nov-07	150	40	26.7	Nov-07	76	27	35.50%
48	Canada	Oct-08	8	68	22.1	N.A.	93	32	34.40%
53	Italy	Apr-08	630	134	21.3	Apr-08	322	58	18.00%
60	UK	May-05	646	126	19.5	N.A.	746	147	19.70%
66	France	Jun-07	577	105	18.2	Sep-08	343	75	21.90%
72	USA	Nov-08	435	73	16.8	Nov-06	98	15	15.30%
88	Ireland	May-07	166	22	13.3	Jul-07	60	13	21.70%

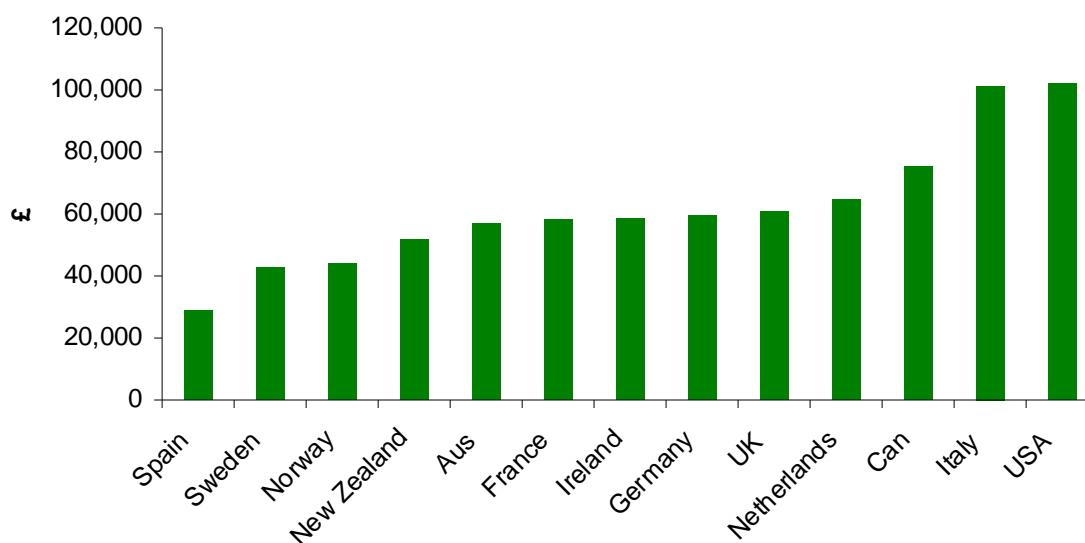
ⁱⁱPosition among 188 countries. Information supplied on 22 June 2009

Source: Inter-parliamentary Union

6.4 Pay/costs

The Senior Salaries Review Body, which looks at pay and pensions for top public sector workers, published in January 2008 a report which contained international comparisons of pay for members of parliaments in selected countries. The chart below shows MPs' salaries in sterling equivalent using OECD purchasing power parities (see the notes to the accompanying table for further detail). It shows that the salary for an MP in the UK is at the median point.

Members of Parliament salaries in sterling equivalent, 2007



Source: Review Body on Senior Salaries, [Review of parliamentary pay, pensions and allowances, 2007](#), Cm 7270

Table 52: Comparison of salaries and Members of Parliament in selected countries

Country and currency	Annual salary in national currency ⁱⁱ	Value of salary in sterling
UK £	60,675	60,675
Australia Aus \$	127,060	56,471
Canada Can \$	150,800	75,779
France €	83,435	57,941
Germany €	84,108	59,231
Ireland ⁱⁱⁱ	101,446	62,621
Italy €	140,444	101,039
Netherlands ^{iv} €	90,070	64,336
New Zealand NZ \$	122,500	51,471
Norway Nkr	612,000	43,621
Spain €	36,249	29,233
Sweden SKr	634,800	42,805
USA \$	165,200	101,975

ⁱThis table compares gross base salaries, before tax, social security, pension etc contributions. It takes no account of allowances, free travel and other entitlements. Most salaries for members of parliaments are taken from the respective parliament or government websites but data for Ireland and Norway were obtained from official sources in those countries. The figures were checked on 15 November 2007.

ⁱⁱPurchasing Power Parities (PPP) are used to convert salaries in national currencies to the equivalent purchasing power in sterling. This provides a better comparison of relative value than conversion using (often more volatile) exchange rates. The PPP rates have been calculated from the OECD 2006 PPP rates, the latest available when the report was written.

ⁱⁱⁱThe base salary for Irish TDs is currently €95,363, rising to €98,407 after four years and to €101,446 after eight years.

^{iv}Including 8 per cent holiday allowance. An additional but unspecified end of year allowance is also payable.

Source: Review Body on Senior Salaries, [Review of Parliamentary pay pensions and allowances 2007](#), Cm 7270/1

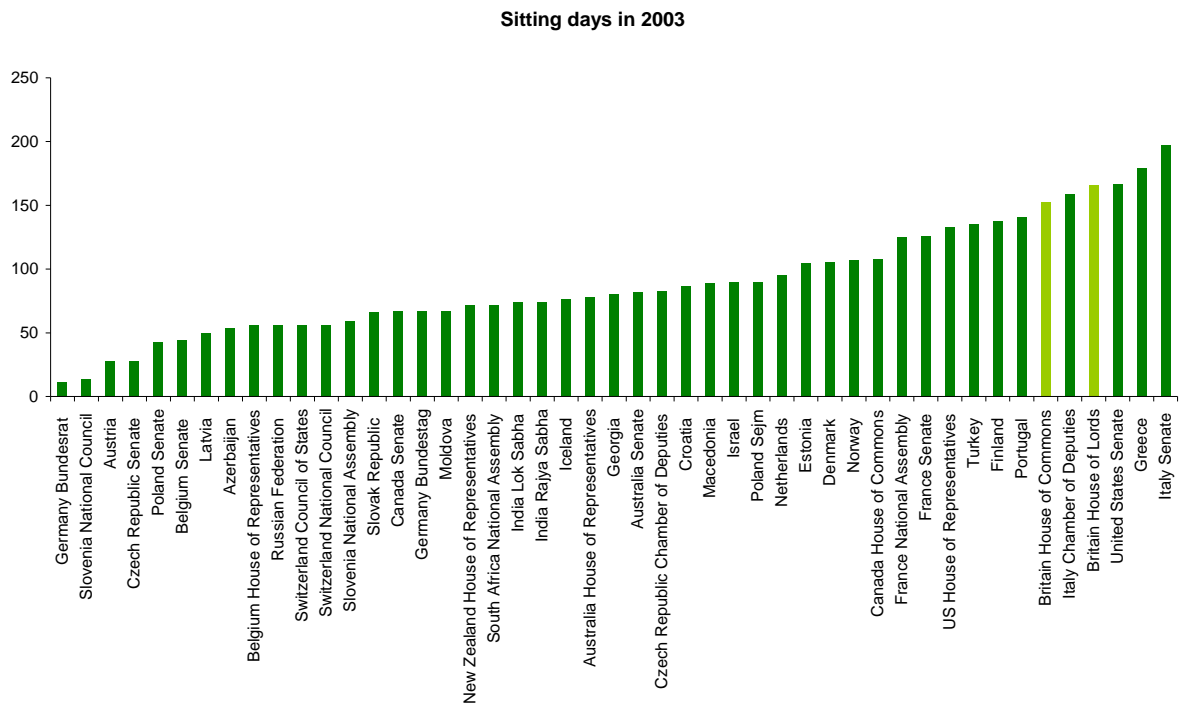
6.5 Sitting hours

In the UK, Members spend a considerable amount of the time when Parliament is not sitting getting on with work in their constituencies. Parliaments around the world have different roles and patterns of working. Nevertheless, it is interesting to compare the number of sitting days and hours of the House of Lords and the House of Commons with those of the parliaments of other countries.

The data below refer to the number of days and length of plenary sessions (i.e. data on the number and length of non-plenary sittings, such as in Committee, are excluded). Data from European parliaments and the United States have been obtained via correspondence with individual parliaments. Data for selected Commonwealth parliaments are extracted from *The Table: the Journal of the Society of Clerks-of-the-Table in Commonwealth Parliaments*.

The number and length of sittings may be affected by several factors, including whether a parliamentary election was held in any given year. Election years are identified in the table below. Some of the data obtained through correspondence have been provided in different year formats, typically in sessional years (e.g. 2003-04) rather than individual calendar years – these are indicated with an asterisk in the tables. In the small number of cases where this is so, the data shown are for the second of the two years (i.e. where data have been provided for the sessional year 2003-04 these are reported for the calendar year 2004). Where extraordinary sessions are held, these are added to the data for the relevant calendar year.

It is certainly the case that the House of Commons sat on more days and for more hours than almost all other European legislatures in years when parliamentary elections have not been held. However, there are some exceptions. The French National Assembly tends to sit for slightly more hours than the House of Commons, while in 2004 the Italian Chamber of Deputies and the Senate sat for more days than the Commons. The Greek Parliament also tends to sit on more days than most other European chambers with the exception of 2004 which was a parliamentary election year in Greece. The United States Senate has also sat for more hours than the Commons in three out of the five years covered by this study, although one of these years was 2005 when a general election was held in the UK.



Source: ECPRD via House of Commons Library correspondence with individual parliaments and, for Commonwealth parliaments, *The Table: Journal of the Society of Clerks-of-the-Table in Commonwealth Parliaments*

¹ 2003 was chosen as the most recent year where figures were available for most countries and most countries, including Britain, had no election.

The data used in the creation of the chart above, together with some comparisons of total sitting hours, are shown in the table below.

Table 54: International comparisons of sitting days and hours

Country	Chamber	Parliamentary election years	Days/sittings					Hours.minutes				
			2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Austria	National Council	2002	30	18	28	33	28	343.18	323.57	308.02	324.34	435.38
Azerbaijan	Milli Mejlis House of Representatives	2005	68	67	54	64	42	272.00	268.00	216.00	256.00	168.00
Belgium	Senators	2003	62	67	56	45	45	288.04	332.52	300.32	219.28	239.30
Belgium	Senate	2003	46	49	44	45	35	258.50	276.24	228.54	194.07	204.11
Croatia	Parliament Chamber of Deputies	2003	93	88	87	72	80	...	...	...	650.28	570.06
Czech Republic	Deputies	2002	72	63	83	68	78	...	...	...	...	...
Czech Republic	Senate	2002	34	25	28	28	24	193.22	129.16	181.51	192.46	195.47
Denmark	Folketing	2002;										
Denmark	Folketing	2005	105	94	106	104	96	617.00	616.00	696.00	724.00	677.00
Estonia	Riigikogu	2003	124	122	105	117	117	453.35	382.19	249.41	366.22	264.27
Finland	Eduskunta	2003	134	159	138	128	134	495.42	661.11	460.40	453.03	491.46
France	National Assembly	2002	...	...	125	135	110	...	...	1,197.10	1,245.35	954.20
France	Senate	2002	96	82	126	124	119	645.35	569.55	957.25	933.30	901.20
Georgia	Parliament	(revolution 2003); 2004	89	87	80	75	86	654.30	643.20	550.34	492.17	624.20
Germany	Bundesrat	2005	13	13	11	12	11	57.01	46.26	38.31	45.37	30.45
Germany	Bundestag	2005	69	60	67	64	38	525.36	465.30	475.38	491.36	254.36
Greece	Vouli ton Ellinon	2004	212	193	179	110	248	942.15	666.29	767.53	454.10	1,085.24
Iceland	Althing	2003	96	96	76	112	101	567.30	619.00	395.50	658.00	568.00
Israel	Knesset Chamber of Deputies	2003	96	89	90	112	103	...	...	526.10	708.42	589.32
Italy	Deputies	2001	81	164	159	163	159	428.16	947.25	928.56	907.42	717.26
Italy	Senate	2001	...	...	197	190	197	...	...	...	504.00	494.00
Latvia	Saemia	2002	47	51	50	54	46	194.25	222.95	202.30	197.00	166.45
Lithuania	Seimas	2004	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Macedonia	Assembly	2002	...	8	89	136	112	...	39.58	519.05	865.35	583.20
Moldova	Parliament	2001;										
Moldova	Parliament	2005	67	72	67	46	54	131.49	161.03	119.28	101.35	148.54
Netherlands	House of Representatives	2002;										
Netherlands	House of Representatives	2003	105	91	95	97	106	888.38	733.37	738.38	762.46	958.42
Norway	Storting	2001;										
Norway	Storting	2005	106	108	107	102	101	492.31	500.30	498.30	431.23	397.21
Poland	Sejm	2001;										
Poland	Sejm	2005	78	74	90	99	67	928.00	976.00	113.00	58.30	54.30
Poland	Senate	2001;										
Poland	Senate	2006	47	47	43	49	33	300.22	239.45	226.03	240.40	182.28
Portugal	Assembly of the Republic	2002;										
Portugal	Assembly of the Republic	2005	105	30	141	107	21	382.50	116.58	567.52	377.32	84.23
Russian Federation	Duma	2003	73	72	56	72	65	401.30	396.00	308.00	396.00	357.30
Slovak Republic	National Council	2002	83	72	66	72	64	...	...	...	...	...
Slovenia	National Assembly	2004	100	87	59	61	64	409.25	384.53	369.02	433.01	397.41
Slovenia	National Council	2004	10	10	14	15	19	20.19	30.39	49.25	43.04	48.47
Sweden	Riksdag	2003	...	...	...	...	...	652.00	652.00	550.00	602.00	730.00
Switzerland	Council of States	2003	56	55	56	57	52	157.01	194.55	174.08	145.55	183.05
Switzerland	National Council	2003	56	55	56	57	52	298.15	314.25	302.25	310.10	290.20
Turkey	Grand National Assembly	2002	142	101	135	132	128	743.58	417.02	740.27	660.29	748.34
United Kingdom	House of Commons	2001;										
United Kingdom	House of Commons	2005	145	150	153	160	133	1,146.17	1,178.24	1,201.28	1,238.58	939.11
United Kingdom	House of Lords	2001;										
United Kingdom	House of Lords	2005	132	156	166	160	126	894.08	1,090.57	1,206.25	1,113.48	883.48
United States	House of Representatives	2002 (part); 2004 (part)	142	123	133	110	140	922.04	772.15	1,014.39	879.03	1,067.12
United States	Senate	2003 (part); 2004 (part)	173	149	167	133	159	1,236.15	1,043.23	1,454.05	1,031.31	1,222.26

Source: ECPRD via House of Commons Library correspondence with individual parliaments

Country, Chamber, Parliamentary election years	Days/sittings				
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Australia House of Representatives 2001; 2004	57	...	78	62	...
Australia Senate 2001; 2005	52	79	82	62	...
Canada House of Commons 2004	134	124	108	100	...
Canada Senate 2004	...	69	67	...	...
India Lok Sabha 2004	79	84	74	...	...
India Rajya Sabha 2004	81	82	74	50	...
New Zealand House of Representatives 2002; 2005	99	73	96	97	...
South Africa National Assembly 2004	...	80	72	49	...

Source: *The Table: Journal of the Society of Clerks-of-the-Table in Commonwealth Parliaments*