



## In Focus

### Leader of the House of Lords: Holders of the Post

#### Background

On 14 July 2016, it was announced that Baroness Evans of Bowes Park had been appointed as Leader of the House of Lords, replacing Baroness Stowell of Beeston.<sup>1</sup> Baroness Evans was made a life Peer in 2014 and is currently the youngest female Member of the House.<sup>2</sup> Her appointment to the position at the age of 40 makes her the youngest Leader of the House of Lords in modern times. Lord Windlesham was 41 when appointed in 1973.<sup>3</sup> Of those who previously held the post, Lord Grenville was 31 when appointed in 1790 and Earl Granville was 39 on appointment to the position in 1855.<sup>4</sup>

#### Previous Office Holders since 1963<sup>5</sup>

The following table lists previous leaders of House of Lords over the course of the last 50 years. Six of the previous ten holders of that office have been women.

Name	Period in Office
Baroness Stowell of Beeston	July 2014–July 2016
Lord Hill of Oareford	January 2013–July 2014
Lord Strathclyde	May 2010–January 2013
Baroness Royall of Blaisdon	October 2008–May 2010
Baroness Ashton of Upholland	June 2007–October 2008
Baroness Amos	September 2003–June 2007
Lord Williams of Mostyn	June 2001–September 2003
Baroness Jay of Paddington	July 1998–May 2001
Lord Richard	May 1997–July 1998
Viscount Cranborne	July 1994–May 1997
Lord Wakeham	April 1992–July 1994
Lord Waddington	December 1990–March 1992
Lord Belstead	January 1988–December 1990
Viscount Whitelaw	June 1983–January 1988
Baroness Young	September 1981–May 1983

Lord Soames	May 1979–September 1981
Lord Peart	September 1976–May 1979
Lord Shepherd	February 1974–September 1976
Lord Windlesham	June 1973–February 1974
Earl Jellicoe	June 1970–June 1973
Lord Shackleton	January 1968–June 1970
Earl of Longford	October 1964–January 1968
Lord Carrington	October 1963–October 1964

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## Roles and Responsibilities in the House

The Leader of the House of Lords performs a dual role. The Leader has overall responsibility for the passage of government legislation through the House of Lords, exercised jointly with the Lords Chief Whip.<sup>6</sup> In addition to leading the government benches, the Leader repeats statements made by the Prime Minister in the Commons and assists and advises all Members of the House of Lords. At question time it is the Leader, rather than the Lord Speaker, who advises the House when to move on to the next question or assists when two (or more) Members rise at the same time. Therefore, the Leader, alongside other Members of the front benches, has a role in interventions. They also take part in formal ceremonies in the House, such as the State Opening of Parliament.<sup>7</sup>

The term ‘Leader of the House’ as applied to the House of Lords only acquired general usage in the mid-19th century, although the position evolved towards the beginning of the previous century.<sup>8</sup> Charles Spencer, the third Earl of Sunderland, was the first Peer responsible for the management of the House of Lords from around 1717.

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<sup>1</sup> Prime Minister’s Office, ‘[New Ministerial Appointment July 2016: Leader of the House of Lords](#)’, 14 July 2016.

<sup>2</sup> UK Parliament, ‘[Membership and Principal Office Holders](#)’, accessed 15 July 2016.

<sup>3</sup> *Guardian*, ‘[Lord Windlesham: Obituary](#)’, 23 December 2010.

<sup>4</sup> PJ Jupp, ‘[Grenville, William Wyndham, Baron Grenville \(1759–1834\)](#)’, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, accessed 15 July 2016; and Muriel E Chamberlain, ‘[Gower, Granville George Leveson, second Earl Granville \(1815–1891\)](#)’, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, accessed 15 July 2016.

<sup>5</sup> House of Lords Library, ‘[Principal Office Holders in the House of Lords](#)’, 19 March 2015, pp 33–4.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*, pp 17 and 21.

<sup>7</sup> Office of the Leader of the House of Lords, ‘[What We Do](#)’ accessed on 15 July 2016.

<sup>8</sup> JC Sainty, ‘The Origin of the Leadership of the House of Lords’, in Clyve Jones and David Lewis Jones (ed), *Peers, Politics and Power: The House of Lords, 1603–1911*, 1986, pp 220–1.

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