



RESEARCH PAPER 00/61  
15 JUNE 2000

# Lords Reform: The interim House – background statistics

Stage one of the Government's reform of the House of Lords took place from the beginning of this Parliamentary Session. The House of Lords Act 1999 removed most hereditary peers from membership of the House of Lords. This paper shows how reform so far has changed the composition of the House of Lords in terms of peer type, age, sex and party. It also details Government defeats in the Lords, peerage creations by successive Prime Ministers and expenditure of the House of Lords.

Previous versions of this paper contain similar data for the former House - research paper 98/104, *Lords Reform: Background statistics* and 99/5, *The House of Lords Bill: 'Stage One' Issues*.

This paper should be read with its companion research paper 00/60, *Lords Reform; major developments since the House of Lords Act 1999*.

Richard Cracknell

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## **Summary of main points**

- There are just under 700 members of the interim House of Lords;
- 83% of the membership are Life Peers (compared with 39% a year ago);
- Women are now 16% of all Members of the Lords (this is double that of a year ago);
- Conservative Peers represent 33% of the interim House (41% of the former House of Lords was Conservative);
- Labour Peers now comprise 28% of the House (they were 15% previously);
- Over the past 30 years, defeats in the House of Lords have been higher for Labour than Conservative governments. The Government has continued to be defeated in the interim House at a relatively high rate;
- Tony Blair has created 202 peers to date; the implied annual rate of peerage creation is higher than for any previous Prime Minister since 1958.

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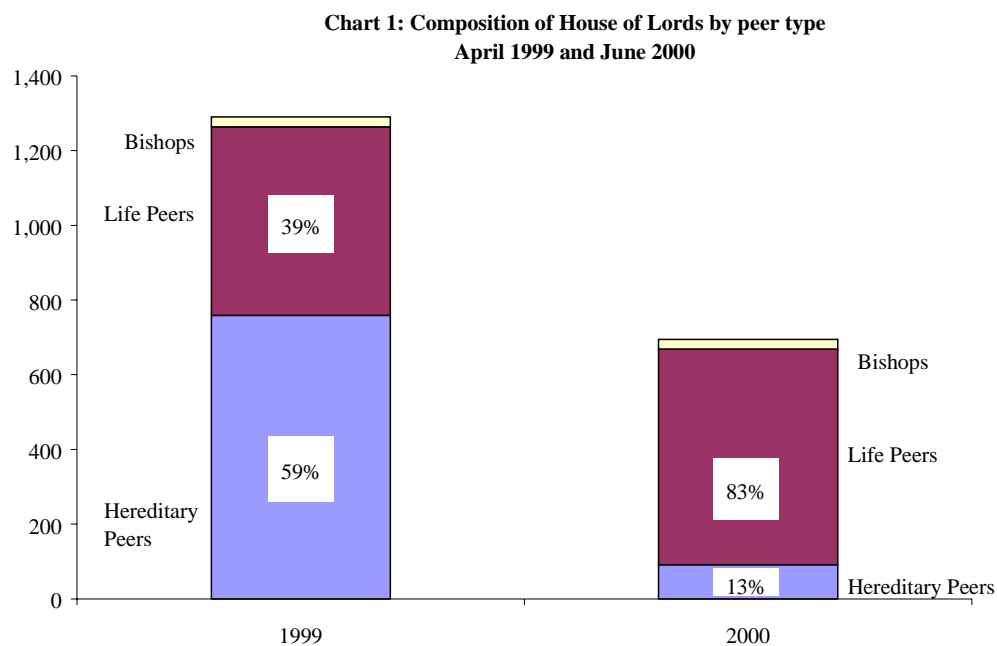
## I Composition of the Interim House of Lords

### A. Peerage type

There are currently 695 members of the House of Lords. The majority, 83%, is now life peers. Before reform, 59% of potential members of the Lords had been hereditary peers.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 1: Composition of the House of Lords by peer type – June 2000**

Peer type		
Life	561)	83%
Life (hereditary given life peerage)	17)	
Elected hereditary	89	13%
Archbishop/Bishop	26	4%
Hereditary Royal Office holder	2	0%
Total	695	100%



<sup>1</sup> See Research Paper 98/104 and 99/5 for statistics of the former House of Lords

## B. Gender

In April 1999 there were 103 women members of the House of Lords. This was 8% of the total. In June 2000, the interim House had 111 women members. This is 16% of the total. 107 life peers are women and 4 elected hereditary peers are women.

**Table 2 Composition of the House of Lords by gender and party – June 2000**

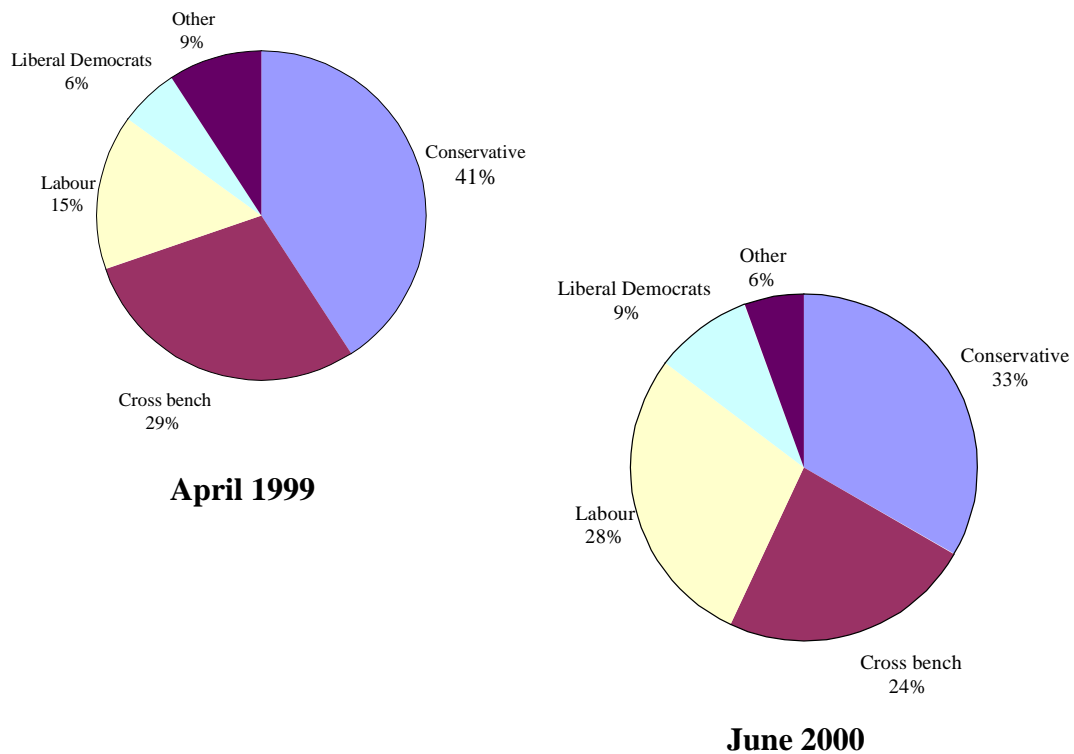
Party	Women	Men & Women	% women
Conservative	34	232	15%
Labour	44	197	22%
Cross bench	18	164	11%
Liberal Democrat	14	63	22%
Bishops	-	26	0%
Other	1	13	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>695</b>	<b>16%</b>

Around 1 in 7 Conservative peers are women, compared with 1 in 5 Labour and Liberal Democrat. Women are less well-represented on the Cross benches with around 1 in 10 there.

## C. Party

In the former House of Lords the Conservatives had 41% of potential members. The Crossbenches had 29%, Labour 15% and the Liberal Democrats 6%. In the interim House, the Conservatives are still potentially the largest single group, with 33% but Labour is now the second largest group with 28% of all members.

**Chart 2: Composition of House of Lords by party – April 1999 & June 2000**



**Table 3: Composition of the House of Lords by party – June 2000**

Party	Number	%
Conservative	232	33%
Cross bench	164	24%
Labour	197	28%
Liberal Democrats	63	9%
Other	39	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>695</b>	<b>100%</b>

## D. Age

The average age of members of the interim House is currently 67 years. In August 1998, the average for the former House was 65 years. 58% of the interim House is aged 65 or over. In August 1998 54% was in this age bracket.

**Table 4: Age distribution of the House of Lords June 2000 and August 1998**

	Interim House June 2000		Former House August 1998	
	Number	%	Number	%
21-25	0	0%	2	0%
26-30	1	0%	8	1%
31-35	2	0%	11	1%
36-40	6	1%	17	1%
41-45	12	2%	43	4%
46-50	30	4%	66	6%
51-55	48	7%	86	8%
56-60	91	13%	139	12%
61-65	113	16%	153	13%
66-70	109	16%	168	15%
71-75	96	14%	168	15%
76-80	83	12%	131	12%
81-85	50	7%	84	7%
86-90	30	4%	42	4%
91-95	16	2%	16	1%
96-100	1	0%	4	0%
All Ages(a)	688	100%	1,138	100%

(a) August 1998 excludes peers without writ of summons and those on leave of absence; June 2000 excludes 9 peers for whom date of birth is not held.

Source: Calculations based on data from the House of Lords Information Office

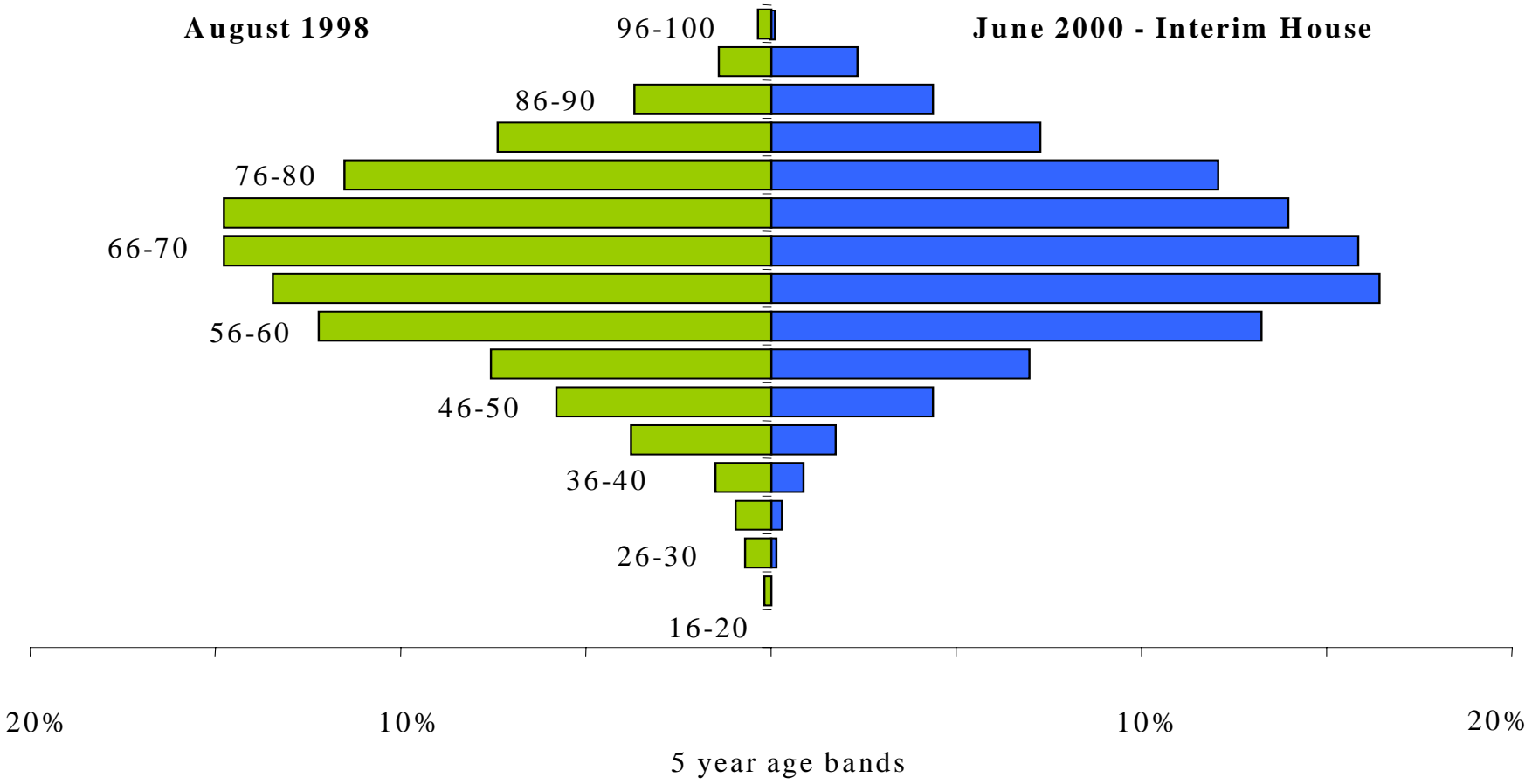
By contrast, the average age of MPs is currently 52 years. 8% of MPs are aged 65 or over.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Source: House of Commons Library database



**Chart 3 : Age distribution of peers  
August 1998 and June 2000**



## II Government Defeats<sup>3</sup> in the House of Lords

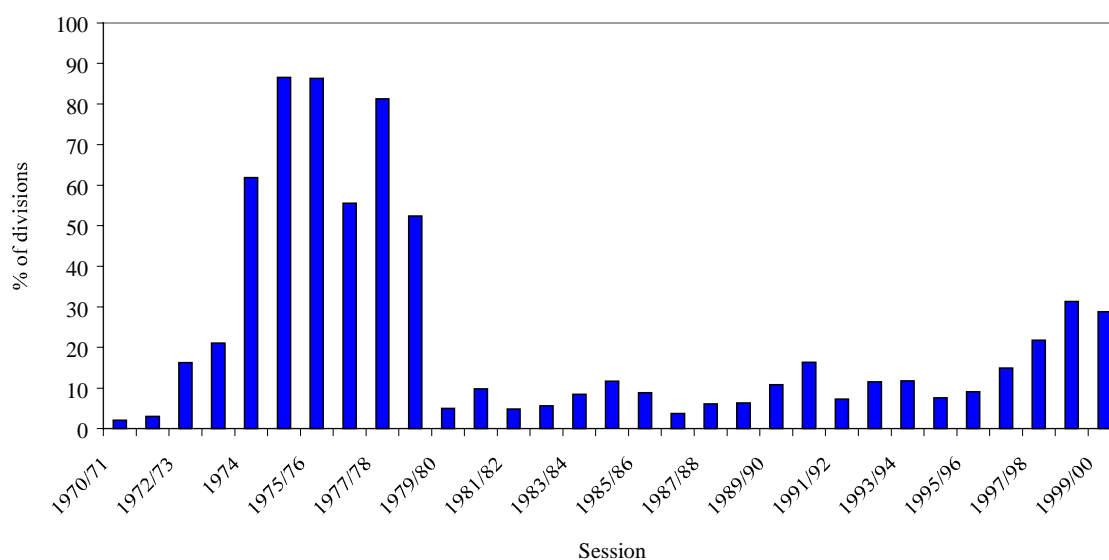
### A. Defeats 1970-71 to 1999-2000

The average number of defeats in the Lords is 23 per session since 1970-71. All the sessions since 1997-98 have had a higher rate of Government defeats than any session since 1978-79. Previously, relatively high numbers of Government defeats occurred during the 1974-79 Labour Government, particularly in the first two sessions when over 85% of divisions that took place in the Lords were defeats for the Government.<sup>4</sup> From 1970-71 to 1997-98, the average number of Government defeats per session under Labour Governments is 63 compared with 8 for Conservative Governments. **Table 5** shows the number of Government defeats in each session since 1970-71.

In 1998-99 31% of divisions in the Lords resulted in a Government defeat. To the end of May 2000, under the interim House, there have been 15 Government defeats, representing 29% of all divisions.

**Chart 4** shows the proportion of divisions in the Lords where the Government was defeated.

Chart 4: Government defeats in the House of Lords  
1970-71 to 1999-2000 (to end May)



<sup>3</sup> Throughout this paper a government defeat is defined as one where the tellers on the losing side are government whips.

<sup>4</sup> For further details see Donald Shell *The House of Lords* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1992

**Table 5: Government defeats in the House of Lords 1970-71 to 1999-2000**

Session	Number	Session	Number
1970/71	4	1985/86	22
1971/72	5	1986/87	3
1972/73	13	1987/88	17
1973/74	4	1988/89	12
1974	13	1989/90	20
1974/75	103	1990/91	17
1975/76	126	1991/92	6
1976/77	25	1992/93	19
1977/78	78	1993/94	16
1978/79	11	1994/95	8
1979/80	15	1995/96	10
1980/81	18	1996/97	10
1981/82	7	1997/98	39
1982/83	5	1998/99	31
1983/84	20	1999/00 to May	15
1984/85	17		

Source: House of Lords Information Office; HL Deb 16 Oct 1995 WA 90; House of Lords Sessional Statistics

## **B. Defeats this session – the interim House**

Table 6 details the 15 Government defeats in the Lords so far this session. In 7 of these divisions the Government would not have lost had the votes of hereditary peers been excluded.

**Table 6: Government Defeats in the House of Lords  
Session 1999-2000 (to end May 2000)**

Date	Bill/Measure	Description	Contents			Not Contents			Majority
			Hereditary	Life	All	Hereditary	Life	All	
1-Jan-00	Criminal Justice (Mode of Trial)	Amdt 1 Whether the accused is still to have the choice of jury trial in "either way" cases	53	169	222	12	114	126	96
7-Feb-00	Local Govt Bill	Clause 68 prohibition on promotion of homosexuality	58	152	210	12	153	165	45
22-Feb-00	Greater London Authority (Election Expenses) Order 2000	Amdt to motion, declining to approve and calling on HMG to allow candidates for election to have one freepost delivery per household	57	158	215	8	142	150	65
22-Feb-00	Greater London Authority (Election Expenses) Order 2001	Motion to annul SI	56	150	206	6	137	143	63
9-Mar-00	Local Govt Bill	Amdt 10 local authority to decide whether to introduce executive arrangements	51	93	144	4	78	82	62
14-Mar-00	Learning and Skills Bill	Amdt 138A abolition of grammar schools by parental ballot	53	113	166	9	152	161	5
23-Mar-00	Learning and Skills Bill	Amdt 3 definition of disproportionate expenditure	49	124	173	6	121	127	46
23-Mar-00	Learning and Skills Bill	Amdt 5 provision of careers advice etc to all young people by Connexions service	39	118	157	6	136	142	15
23-Mar-00	Learning and Skills Bill	Amdt 8 sex education Secretary of State's guidance - amdt of Education Act 1996	55	135	190	10	165	175	15
28-Mar-00	Care Standards Bill	Amdt 15 standards of regulation and inspection in independent sector	40	122	162	4	128	132	30
13-Apr-00	Financial Service and Markets Bill	Amdt 22 investigator to recommend FSA makes ex gratia payment if complaint considered well founded or has criticised FSA in his report	32	92	124	4	115	119	5
15-May-00	Child Support, Pensions and Social Security Bill	Amdt 142A concurrent scheme membership of stakeholder and occupational and personal pension schemes	8	14	22	0	11	11	11
18-May-00	Financial Service and Markets Bill	Amdt 40 provisions included in Authority's code by reference to City Code	6	112	118	46	121	167	49
18-May-00	Financial Service and Markets Bill	Amdt 63 market abuse: behaviour conforming with City code	43	101	144	5	100	105	39
22-May-00	Child Support, Pensions and Social Security Bill	Amdt 175 war widows' pensions	40	103	143	3	114	117	26

Divisions where hereditary peers voting against the government less those voting for are greater than the overall majority in that division

### III Peerage creations

Table 7 shows the number of peerage creations by Prime Minister in Office since the first list of life peers was published in July 1958 under the Life Peerages Act 1958.

**Table 7: Peerage creations by Prime Minister in office at time of announcement, July 1958 - June 2000**

	Hereditary		Life		Law <sup>1</sup>		Total			Annual annual creations <sup>2</sup>
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	All	
Macmillan 1958-63	37	-	40	7	6	-	83	7	90	16
Douglas-Home	10	-	14	2	3	-	27	2	29	26
Wilson 1964-70	6	-	121	14	2	-	129	14	143	25
Heath	-	-	37	8	3	-	40	8	48	12
Wilson 1974-76	-	-	69	11	3	-	72	11	83	38
Callaghan	-	-	53	5	2	-	55	5	60	19
Thatcher	4	-	174	27	11	-	189	27	216	18
Major	-	-	131	29	11	-	142	29	171	25
Blair <sup>3</sup>	-	-	154	44	4	-	158	44	202	66
1958-June 2000	57	0	793	147	45	0	895	147	1,042	

<sup>1</sup> Peers created under the Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1876

<sup>2</sup> Excluding peers created under the Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1876

<sup>3</sup> Life Peer total includes 10 peerages given to former hereditary peers

Source: *Peerage Creations, 1958 –1998* House of Lords Library (updated with information from House of Lords Information Office)

Of the 202 peerages announced under the present Prime Minister, 22% have been women. Table 8 shows the distribution of party of allegiance of these 202 peers. Half are Labour peers, 18% Conservative and 16% Crossbenchers and 15% Liberal Democrat.

**Table 8: Peerage creations since May 1997 by party of allegiance**

Party	Number	%
Labour	100	50%
Conservative	37	18%
Liberal Democrat	31	15%
Cross Bench	32	16%
Other	2	1%
Total	202	100%

## IV Expenditure

Total spending on the House of Lords in financial year 2000/01 is planned to be £54 million. Around £31 million of this covers the reimbursement of Peers' expenses and the administrative costs of the House of Lords' Offices and Refreshment Department. It also includes the House of Lords' share of the security costs of the Palace of Westminster, and financial assistance to Opposition parties.

Expenditure on works and maintenance is planned to be around £18 million. This covers the costs of works services for the House of Lords and 40% of the costs of projects shared with the House of Commons.

Control over this spending, which is not cash limited, is vested in the House of Lords' Offices Committee, appointed each session.

**Table 9 House of Lords Expenditure 1996/7 to 2001/2**

	<i>£ Thousands</i>					
	1996-97 outturn	1997-98 outturn	1998-99 outturn	1999-00 outturn	2000-01 plans	2001-2 plans
Expenses of peers	7,021	6,579	9,487	9,900	8,417	8,800
House of Lords Offices						
salaries	6,458	6,408	6,814	7,338	7,916	7,493
grant in aid to History of Parliament Trust	-	-	-	200	210	200
other running costs	5,426	6,429	6,993	7,443	7,800	7,493
Retired allowances etc	1,210	1,161	1,313	1,646	1,779	1,412
Security	5,791	5,979	6,177	6,169	6,670	7,063
Refreshment Dept	1,062	1,066	1,215	1,313	1,344	1,415
<b>Gross Total</b>	26,968	27,622	31,999	34,009	34,136	33,876
Less: Appropriations in Aid	2,088	1,999	2,320	2,624	2,745	2,170
<b>Net Total</b>	24,880	25,623	29,679	31,385	31,391	31,706
Capital Works	5,519	4,302	4,933	6,953	9,524	5,305
Current works	4,130	5,200	4,702	3,213	4,151	5,245
Rent, property taxes & other operating costs	2,380	2,736	2,210	2,515	3,044	4,138
Administration costs	2,109	2,083	2,215	2,266	2,300	2,245
<b>Gross Total</b>	14,138	14,321	14,060	14,947	19,019	16,933
Less: Appropriations in Aid	499	537	500	480	867	669
<b>Net Total</b>	13,639	13,784	13,560	14,467	18,152	16,264
Non voted unallocated provision	-	-	-	-	4,085	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	38,519	39,407	43,239	45,852	53,628	47,970

Source: Cm 4618 *The Government's Expenditure Plans 2000-01*

Further details of House of Lords' expenditure and other information can be found in the House of Lords Annual Report and Accounts.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> HL Paper 104, published 11 October 1999