



House of Lords Statistics

Standard Note: SN/SG/3900
Last updated: 4 July 2012
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Section: Social and General Statistics

This note provides summary statistics on the composition and activity of the House of Lords. At 11 June 2012, there were 775 peers able to sit in the House of Lords. No party has an overall majority, but Labour is the largest party with 231 peers (30%). Including Members on leave of absence, disqualified from sitting or suspended, total membership was 816.

There were 180 women in the House of Lords at the end of the 2010-12 session, 22% of the total membership. About half of Members are aged 70 or over.

Further detailed statistical information on the work and composition of the House of Lords can be found in various notes by the [House of Lords Library](#).

Contents

1	Composition of the House of Lords	2
1.1	Peerage type: pre- and post-reform	2
1.2	Peers by party: November 1999 and June 2012	3
1.3	Peers by gender	3
1.4	Peers by age and length of service	4
2	Peerage creations	5
3	House of Lords Activity	5
3.1	Sitting days, attendance and questions by session	5
3.2	Government defeats	7
4	Costs	7
5	Upper chambers in other national parliaments	8

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1 Composition of the House of Lords

At 11 June 2012 there were 775 peers able to sit in the House of Lords. Total membership was 816, including 28 Members on leave of absence, 12 disqualified as senior members of the judiciary and one disqualified as an MEP.

Table 1: Number of peers by party and type, 11 June 2012

	Hereditary			Total	% of total
	Life Peers	Peers	Bishops		
Conservative	164	49		213	27%
Labour	227	4		231	30%
Liberal Democrat	86	4		90	12%
Crossbench	150	31		181	23%
Bishops			26	26	3%
Other	33	1		34	4%
Total	660	89	26	775	100%

Source: <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/lords/lords-by-type-and-party/>

1.1 Peerage type: pre- and post-reform

The *House of Lords Act 1999* removed the right of most hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords. 92 excepted hereditary peers were allowed to remain as Members of the House: two hereditary office holders, 15 Members elected by the whole House to serve as Deputy Speakers or in other offices, and 75 elected by hereditary peers in each party group. When one of these 75 dies, the excepted hereditary peers in their party group elect another hereditary peer to take their place. When one of the 15 Members elected as an office holder dies, the whole House elects their replacement.

Table 2: Number of peers by peerage type

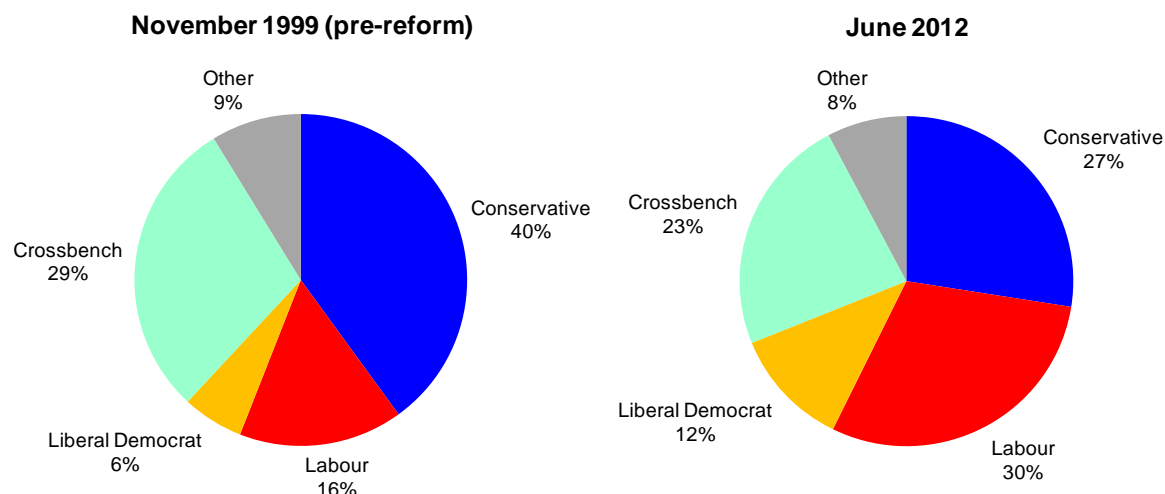
Before and after reforms of House of Lords Act (1999) and currently

Type of peer	Pre-reform Nov 1999	Post-reform Nov 2000	Latest Jun 2012
Hereditary	647	92	89
Life	537	572	660
Bishops	26	26	26
Total	1,210	690	775

Note: Excludes peers on leave of absence, without writ of summons, disqualified or suspended.

Source: House of Lords Information Office, *Statistics on Business and Membership*

1.2 Peers by party: November 1999 and June 2012



Excluding peers on leave of absence or disqualified, Labour had 231 peers at 11 June 2012 (30% of the total), the largest number of any party. There were 213 Conservative peers (27%) and 90 Liberal Democrat peers (12%).

Prior to the removal of most of the hereditary peers in November 1999, two-fifths of peers were Conservative. The Conservatives continued to be the largest party group in the House of Lords until 2005-06.

1.3 Peers by gender

At the end of the last session, 180 women were Members of the House of Lords (22%), including those on leave of absence, disqualified or suspended. The Liberal Democrats had the highest proportion of female peers (29%), followed by Labour (28%).

Table 3: Peers by gender and party, 30 April 2012

	Female		Male		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	
Conservative	39	18%	175	82%	214
Labour	66	28%	169	72%	235
Liberal Democrat	26	29%	64	71%	90
Crossbench	37	20%	149	80%	186
Other	12	18%	56	82%	68
Bishops	0	0%	26	100%	26
Total	180	22%	639	78%	819

Notes: Includes peers who are on leave of absence, suspended or disqualified.

Source: House of Lords Journal Office

1.4 Peers by age and length of service

At 30 April 2012 the median age of Members of the House of Lords was 69 years. Only one in six peers (16%) is aged under 60, while 18% of peers are aged 80 and over. Crossbench peers tend to be older than peers from the main parties. Liberal Democrat Members tend to be younger than Conservative or Labour Members of the Lords.

Table 4: Peers by Age and Party, 30 April 2012

	Median	Age (years)					Total
		<50	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+	
Conservative	70	9	33	58	72	42	214
Labour	69	8	30	81	82	34	235
Liberal Democrat	68	5	17	35	24	9	90
Crossbench	71	5	18	58	65	40	186
Other	70	2	6	24	16	20	68
Bishops	64		2	23	1		26
Total	69	29 4%	106 13%	279 34%	260 32%	145 18%	819 100%

Note: Includes peers on leave of absence, disqualified or suspended.

Source: House of Lords Journal Office

The median length of service of Members of the House of Lords was 12.5 years at 30 April 2012. 16% of Members were introduced to the House after the 2010 General Election. 52% of Members were introduced to the House between May 1997 and May 2010.

On average, Conservative peers have served for longer than those from other parties; a third have been Members of the House of Lords for more than twenty years. The Conservatives also have the highest number of peers who have served for less than five years.

Table 5: Peers by Length of Service and Party, 30 April 2012

	Median	Length of service (years)					Total
		0-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20+	
Conservative	14.9	51	20	39	30	74	214
Labour	12.0	47	46	94	20	28	235
Liberal Democrat	11.4	26	16	32	10	6	90
Crossbench	12.1	31	41	47	20	47	186
Other	14.1	9	14	19	9	17	68
Bishops	3.2	15	9	1	1		26
Total	12.5	179 22%	146 18%	232 28%	90 11%	172 21%	819 100%

Note: Includes peers on leave of absence, disqualified or suspended. Length of service is measured continuously from the date when the Member was introduced to the House.

Source: House of Lords Journal Office

2 Peerage creations

The table below presents a summary of peerages created since 1958, by the Prime Minister in office at the time the peerage was announced. A Prime Minister will not necessarily have recommended all the peerages announced during his or her tenure (for example, peerages recommended in their predecessor's resignation honours list). A list of peerage creations since 1801 is available online at www.peerages.info.

Table 6: Peerage creations by Prime Minister in office at time of announcement

July 1958 to June 2012

	Years in office Jul 1958-Jun 2012	Hereditary		Life		Law		Total		
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	All
Macmillan 1958-63	5.2	37	-	40	7	6	-	83	7	90
Douglas-Home	1.0	10	-	14	2	3	-	27	2	29
Wilson 1964-70	5.7	6	-	121	14	2	-	129	14	143
Heath	3.7	-	-	37	8	3	-	40	8	48
Wilson 1974-76	2.1	-	-	69	11	3	-	72	11	83
Callaghan	3.1	-	-	53	5	2	-	55	5	60
Thatcher	11.6	4	-	174	27	11	-	189	27	216
Major	6.4	-	-	131	29	11	-	142	29	171
Blair	10.2	1	-	286	88	10	1	297	89	386
Brown	2.9	-	-	24	10	2	-	26	10	36
Cameron (to June 2012)	2.1	1	-	84	38	-	-	85	38	123
<i>July 1958 to June 2012</i>	<i>53.9</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>1,033</i>	<i>239</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1,145</i>	<i>240</i>	<i>1,385</i>

Sources: House of Lords Library LLN2008/019 *Peerage Creations 1958-2008*; House of Commons Library SNPC/5867 *Peerage Creations since 1997*

3 House of Lords Activity

3.1 Sitting days, attendance and questions by session

Table 7 sets out statistics on the activity of the House of Lords in previous sessions.

Average daily attendance in the House of Lords was 475 in the 2010-12 session, up from 388 in 2009-10. This compares to an increase in membership from 706 at the end of 2009-10 to 782 at the end of 2010-12. There has been a significant increase in the number of peers attending the House over the past fifty years; in 1959-60 average daily attendance was only 136.

15,081 Written Questions from peers were answered in 2010-12. The number of Written Questions answered per sitting day was 51.5, more than double the number answered per sitting day in 1997-98. The number of Oral Questions per sitting day has remained fairly constant at around 3.6, although they were more frequent in the 2002-03 and 2003-04 sessions.

The number of Questions for Short Debate per sitting day tends to be greatest at the start of a parliament, but their frequency has declined since 1997-2001. There were 92 Questions for Short Debate in the 2010-12 session; by comparison there were 129 in the 1997-98 session despite there being fewer sitting days.

Further statistical information on the membership and work of the House of Lords, including historical trends, can be found in House of Lords Library notes [Work of the House of Lords: Statistics](#) and [House of Lords: Party and Group Strengths and Voting](#).

Table 7: Activity of the House of Lords since 1997

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-12
Sitting days	228	154	177	76	200	174	157	63	206	142	164	134	68	293
Average length of sitting (hours) ¹	7.0	7.6	7.5	6.7	7.0	7.3	7.0	7.3	6.7	6.5	6.8	6.8	6.5	7.2
Average daily attendance	417	446	352	347	370	362	368	388	403	415	413	400	388	475
Questions for Short Debate	129	83	87	28	81	59	50	14	89	55	45	38	6	92
Oral questions <i>per sitting day</i>	832 3.6	539 3.5	630 3.6	270 3.6	713 3.6	687 3.9	634 4.0	228 3.6	743 3.6	519 3.7	595 3.6	484 3.6	248 3.6	1080 3.7
Written questions answered <i>per sitting day</i>	5,729 25.1	4,322 28.1	4,511 25.5	1,993 26.2	5,798 29.0	5,084 29.2	4,524 28.8	1,877 29.8	7,374 35.8	5,118 36.0	5,814 35.5	5,655 42.2	2,906 42.7	15,081 51.5
Government defeats in divisions ² <i>as proportion of total (%)</i>	39 22	31 31	36 19	2 5	56 33	88 39	64 36	37 55	62 32	45 43	29 23	25 28	14 33	48 20

1. Includes adjournments during pleasure (breaks during a sitting).

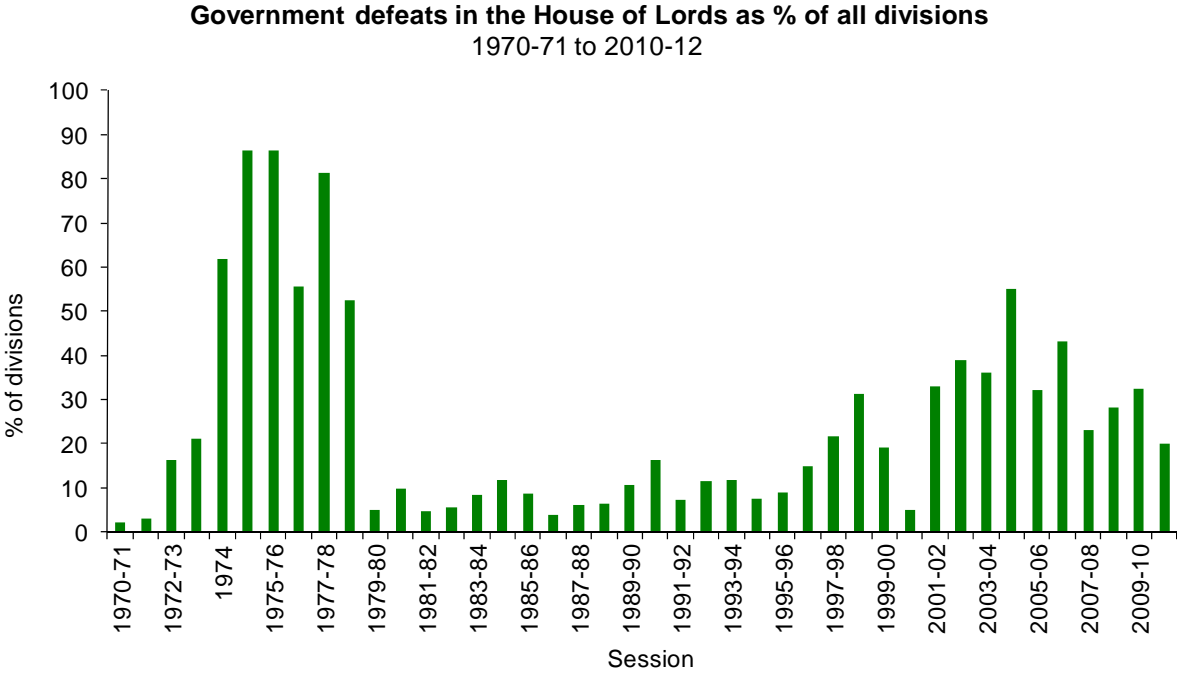
2. Government defeat is defined as where at least one of the tellers on the losing side is a government whip.

Source: House of Lords *Sessional Statistics*; House of Lords Journal Office

3.2 Government defeats

The Government was defeated in 48 out of a total of 241 divisions (20%) in 2010-12. This is the lowest ratio of government defeats to divisions since 2000-01. A government defeat is defined as where at least one of the tellers on the losing side is a government whip.

The rate of government defeats in the Lords in recent years has generally been higher than under Conservative administrations from 1979 to 1997. However as the chart below shows, the rate of government defeats in the Lords between 1997 and 2010 was generally lower than under the 1974-1979 Labour Government.



Source: HL Deb 16 Oct 1995 c90WA; House of Lords Sessional Statistics

4 Costs

Spending on expenses and financial support for Members of the House of Lords was £18.7 million in the 2010/11 financial year. The average number of full time equivalent staff employed by the House administration in 2010/11 was 441.¹

Under the current system of financial support introduced in October 2010, Members who do not receive a ministerial or office holders’ salary may claim a flat rate attendance allowance of £300, or £150 if the attendance is away from Westminster or if the peer chooses to claim this lower amount. Members living outside Greater London may claim travel expenses for journeys to and from Westminster to enable them to attend sittings of the House.²

¹ House of Lords, [Resource Accounts 2010/11](#)

² House of Lords, [Guide to Financial Support for Members](#), February 2012

5 Upper chambers in other national parliaments

Compared to other European Union or G20 countries with bicameral legislatures, the UK has by far the most members in its upper chamber. However attendance patterns in the House of Lords will differ from those in other upper chambers. In the last session, average daily attendance in the House of Lords was 475.

The methods by which members enter the upper chambers of different national parliaments are summarised in an article by Meg Russell, *Elected Second Chambers and Their Powers: An International Survey*.³ These include direct election (for example, in Australia, Japan and the United States); indirect election (as by local councillors in France and subnational governments in Germany); and by appointment (Canada). Other countries use a combination of methods: the Italian Senate includes both directly elected and appointed members while the Spanish Senate includes members elected by subnational parliaments alongside directly elected members.

Table 8: Size of upper chambers in EU27 and G20 countries with bicameral legislatures

Country	Number of members in upper chamber
UK	775
France	348
Italy	321
Spain	264
India	245
Japan	242
Russia	178
Romania	137
Mexico	128
Canada	105
Poland	100
United States	100
South Africa	90
Brazil	81
Czech Rep.	81
Australia	76
Netherlands	75
Argentina	72
Belgium	71
Germany	69
Austria	62
Ireland	60
Slovenia	40

Notes:

1. The following EU27/G20 countries have unicameral legislatures: Bulgaria, China, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Indonesia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, South Korea, Sweden and Turkey.
2. Statutory number of members in upper chamber. This may differ from the number of members currently sitting in the upper chamber.

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union

³ Meg Russell (2012) , "Elected Second Chambers and Their Powers: An International Survey", *The Political Quarterly*, 83(1): 117-129, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-923X.2012.02275.x/pdf>