



Parliamentary Information List

CBP 08344, 22 May 2019

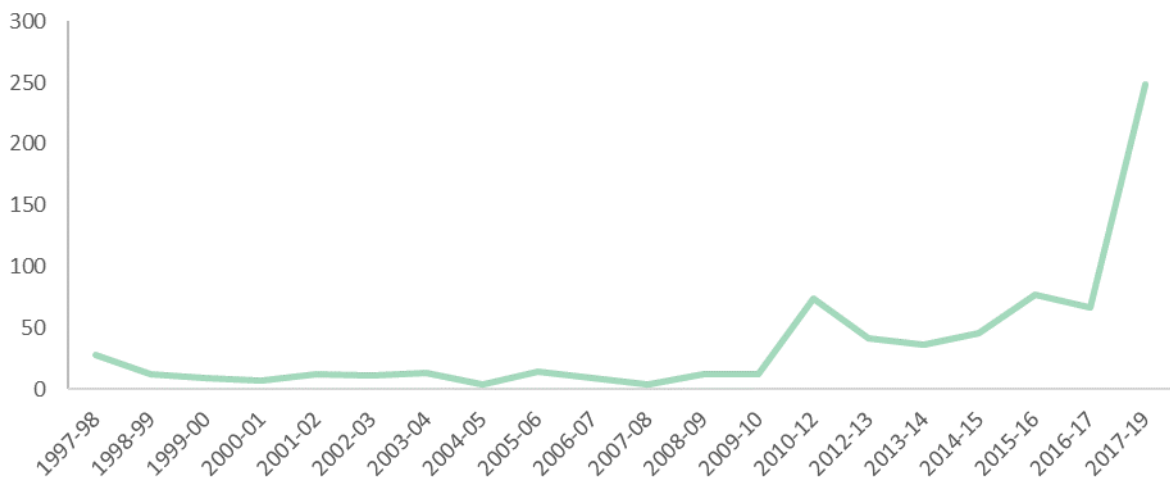
Number of Urgent Questions in the House of Commons since 1997

Compiled by:
Sarah Priddy

What are urgent questions?

Urgent questions are a category of oral questions that allow all MPs not in the Government to put a question to a minister without the usual notice required for oral question time and without the need to be drawn in a ballot.

No. of Urgent Questions asked by session



The urgent question procedure, governed by [Standing Order 21\(2\)](#), allows Members to apply to the Speaker to request that a minister come to the House to make a statement (and take questions) on an important issue at short notice. Notice of an application for an urgent question must be given to the Speaker's Office in advance of that day's sitting. The Speaker gives permission if in his opinion the question is:

“of an urgent character and relates to matters of public importance.”

The Speaker's Office contacts the Member to let them know whether or not their application has been successful but does not provide feedback on unsuccessful requests.

Note:

- Until 2002, urgent questions were known as private notice questions
- 2010-12 and 2017-19 are both extended parliamentary sessions.

Urgent Questions in the House of Lords

Urgent questions in the House of Lords are still known as private notice questions. Peers can apply to the Lord Speaker to ask a private notice question. If granted, the relevant government department is informed immediately and the question is asked at the end of Question Time.

Background on parliamentary questions

See the [Commons Library briefing on Parliamentary Questions: recent issues](#) for more information on parliamentary questions.

Number of Urgent Questions granted by the Speaker since 1997

1997 Parliament

Session	Private Notice Questions	
1997-98	29	1997-98 Parliamentary Search (Intranet) results #
1998-99	12	1998-99 Parliamentary Search (Intranet) results
1999-2000 ¹	9	1999-2000 Parliamentary Search (Intranet) results
2000-01	7	2000-01 Parliamentary Search results
Total	57	

2001 Parliament

Session	Urgent Questions	
2001-02	12	2001-02 Parliamentary Search results
2002-03 ²	11	2002-03 Parliamentary Search results
2003-04	13	2003-04 Parliamentary Search results
2004-05	4	2004-05 Parliamentary Search results
Total	40	

2005 Parliament

Session	Urgent Questions	
2005-06	14	2005-06 Parliamentary Search results
2006-07	9	2006-07 Parliamentary Search results
2007-08	4	2007-08 Parliamentary Search results
2008-09 ³	12	2008-09 Parliamentary Search results
2009-10	12	2009-10 Parliamentary Search results
Total	51	

2010 Parliament

Session	Urgent Questions	
2010-12 ⁴	74	2010-12 Parliamentary Search results
2012-13	41	2012-13 Parliamentary Search results
2013-14	36	2013-14 Parliamentary Search results
2014-15	45	2014-15 Parliamentary Search results
Total	196	

2015 Parliament

Session	Urgent Questions	
2015-16	77	2015-16 Parliamentary Search results
2016-17	74	2016-17 Parliamentary Search results
Total	151	

2017 Parliament

Session	Urgent Questions
2017-19 ⁴	248* 2017-19 Parliamentary Search results

Notes:

1. Michael Martin elected Speaker 23 October 2000
2. Private Notice Questions (PNQs) became known as Urgent Questions (UQs)
3. John Bercow elected Speaker 22 June 2009
4. 2010-12 and 2017-19 are extended parliamentary sessions

Notes on Parliamentary Search

Parliamentary Search results available on Parliament website from 2000-01 onwards

One PNQ missing from Search results as categorised as a Business Question rather than a PNQ

* As at 22 May 2019 - the link updates results for 2017-19

Parliament: facts and figures

- [Browse all briefings in the series](#)

This series of publications contains data on various subjects relating to Parliament and Government. Topics include legislation, MPs, select committees, debates, divisions and Parliamentary procedure.

Feedback

Please send any comments or corrections to: [Parliament and Constitution Centre](#).
Suggestions for new lists welcomed

About the Library

The House of Commons Library research service provides MPs and their staff with the impartial briefing and evidence base they need to do their work in scrutinising Government, proposing legislation, and supporting constituents.

As well as providing MPs with a confidential service we publish open briefing papers, which are available on the Parliament website.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publically available research briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing only with Members and their staff.

If you have any general questions about the work of the House of Commons you can email hcinfo@parliament.uk.

Disclaimer

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties. It is a general briefing only and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. The House of Commons or the author(s) shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice.

The House of Commons accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. This information is provided subject to the [conditions of the Open Parliament Licence](#).