



# House of Commons Trends

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This paper sets out key statistics about the House of Commons. 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, some by calendar year and some by financial year. This should be borne in mind when comparing different sets of information.

This paper updates and replaces RP 09/69.

Charley Coleman

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## Research Paper 13/48

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## Key Trends

- The number of Acts passed by *calendar year* has been slowly decreasing from a peak of 98 in 1964 to a low of 23 in 2012. However the combined length of these acts has increased from 1,340 pages in 1965 to 2,630 pages in 2010 (with a degree of variation between these dates).
- The number of written questions answered per sitting day has been on a generally increasing trend from 205 in 1990-91 to 331 in 2010-12. The peak was 457 in 2005-06.
- The number of Early Day Motions (EDMs) tabled has seen a significant rise from 21 in 1939-40 to 3,024 in 2010-12, which represents the most ever tabled in a Parliamentary session (although note that 2010-12 was also the longest session in the data series).
- Between the sessions of 1991-92 and 1993-94 the number of petitions presented to the House of Commons fell from a peak of 452 to 102. From 1993-94 until 2001-02 the number of petitions presented remained at this lower baseline until starting to increase again reaching a peak of 394 in the 2009-10 session only to fall to 187 in 2010-12.
- The number of seats in the House of Commons has varied been between 630 and 707 since 1832. The House currently has 650 seats.
- 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, and to 143 following the 2010 general election. Women now represent 22% of all MPs, a record proportion.
- The average age of MPs at election has remained relatively constant since 1979, from a low of 49 years in 1997 to a high of 51 years in 2005. The 2010 general election saw 129 MPs elected who were aged over 60, 20% of all Members. However the average age remained lower than any general election since 2001 due to a larger proportion of Members being elected who were aged between 18 and 39.

## Introduction

Statistics on the workings of the House of Commons, its Members and its staff are available from a number of sources, produced both by the Commons itself and by interested third parties and academics.

Sources of note include the resource accounts of the House of Commons and the statistical digests of each session which the House produces which are called the Sessional Returns.<sup>1</sup> Outside of Parliament, scholarly work has also been conducted, focusing on a range of subjects including electoral matters but also in some cases providing statistics on other topics such as backbench rebellions, committees and House of Commons reform and efficacy.

*House of Commons Trends* focuses on the work of the House of Commons and is designed to bring together a range of existing statistical information about different aspects of the House into a single document. It provides a statistical summary which provides chronological depth as well as a breadth of subject coverage.

The data used to produce this paper comes both from existing Parliamentary publications and external sources.

### ***A note about Parliamentary sessions***

Prior to the *Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011*, Parliamentary sessions by convention started in November of a given year and ran until November of the following year. In general election years the session would start after the state opening of Parliament following the election. Therefore Parliamentary sessions directly after general elections were longer – so-called “long sessions” – and the sessions leading up to a general election were shorter – so-called “short sessions”.

The *Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011* sets the date for general elections at a fixed term of five years and polling day as the first Thursday of May, and removes the power of the Prime Minister to call general elections.<sup>2</sup>

The 2010-12 session was a double length session running from the May 2010 general election to May 2012 in order to facilitate this change.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The House of Commons [Sessional Returns](#) are available on Parliament’s website back to 1997-98; House of Commons [resource accounts](#) are also available.

<sup>2</sup> Further details are available in [House of Commons Library Standard Note: Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011, SN06111](#)

<sup>3</sup> [HC Deb 13 Sept 2010 c34WS](#)



# 1 Legislation in Parliament

## 1.1 Background

Parliament has three constituent elements: the House of Commons, the House of Lords and the Crown. Together these three elements make up the legislature of the United Kingdom.

The primary role of the legislature is to scrutinise and pass legislation. In the United Kingdom there are two main forms of legislation: primary and delegated (secondary) legislation. Such legislation is normally presented by the Government: however, there are several mechanisms to allow Private Members' Bills to be introduced by individual Members of Parliament. Comparatively few such Bills become law.

The tables and charts in this section show the number of Public Acts (primary legislation) which have received Royal Assent and Statutory Instruments (regulations or secondary legislation) which have been made by UK Government departments, the National Assembly for Wales (since 1999) and registered by the Statutory Instruments Registrar. It also includes Scottish Statutory Instruments made by the Scottish Administration since 1999 and registered by the Scottish Statutory Instruments Registrar.

## 1.2 Primary legislation

Primary legislation is divided into public, private, and hybrid bills. Such bills are generally debated by both Houses of Parliament. Once passed the Bill receives Royal Assent and become an Act. An Act may also confer certain powers upon Ministers: for example, to make detailed regulations or to pass delegated legislation to make changes without passing another piece of primary legislation.

### 1.2.1 Public Bills

Public Bills fall into two main types: Government Bills and Private Members' (backbench) Bills. Almost all Government Bills are debated and most subsequently become law. 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, may be "lost" at the end of a Session. Many Private Members' Bills are simply introduced, and are not debated at all. Of those that are allocated time for debate, relatively few are passed.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For more information about the passage of primary legislation please see: [House of Commons Background Paper: Public Bills, SN06507](#)

**Table 1: Public Bills, 1997-98 to 2010-12**

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
2008-09	19	7	26	107	5	112
2009-10	18	5	23	63	6	69
2010-12	37	10	47	220	10	230

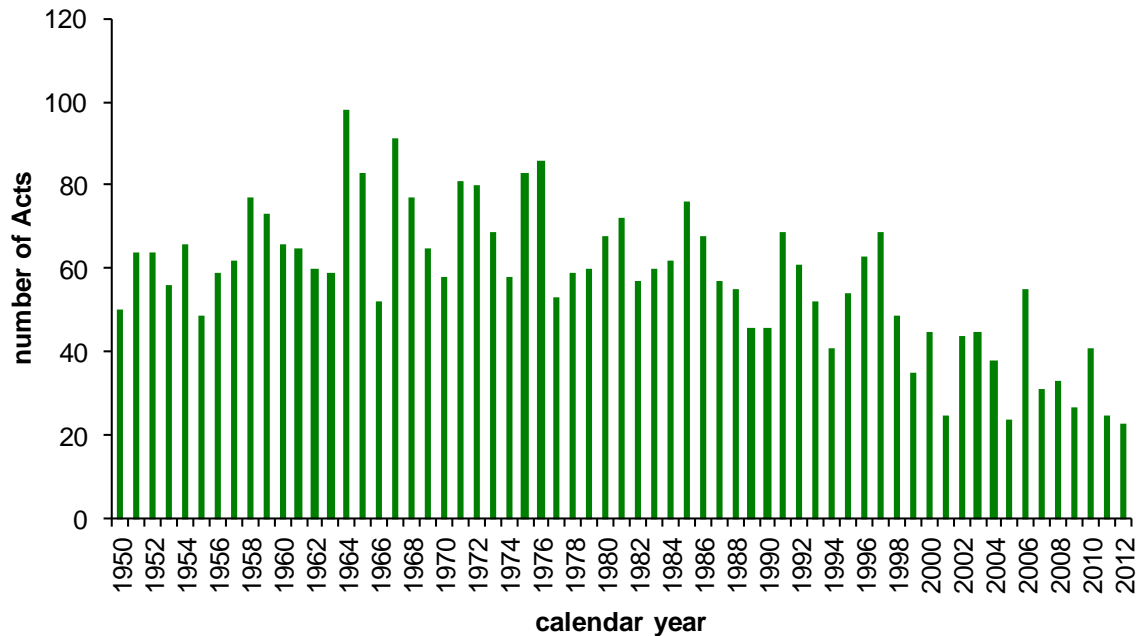
Session	Royal Assent received					
	Government Bills			Private Members' Bills		
	Commons	Lords	Total	Commons	Lords	Total
1997-98	34	18	52	8	2	10
1998-99	18	9	27	7	1	8
1999-00	27	12	39	5	1	6
2000-01	14	7	21	0	0	0
2001-02	26	13	39	7	1	8
2002-03	23	10	33	13	0	13
2003-04	22	11	33	5	0	5
2004-05	14	7	21	0	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
2008-09	16	6	22	4	1	5
2009-10	18	5	23	5	2	7
2010-12	33	10	43	5	1	6

**Source**

House of Commons Sessional Returns

The number of Acts passed by *calendar year* has been slowly decreasing from a peak of 98 in 1964 and reached a low of 23 in 2012. However, it should be noted that whilst this decline is the general trend the actual pattern varies slightly with the pattern of short and long sessions.

### Acts Passed 1950 to 2012



**Source**

Office for Public Sector Information, and [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

#### 1.2.2 Private Bills

Private Bills are a separate category of primary legislation. They affect specific groups of people or localities, unlike public legislation, which affects all people equally. They proceed through Parliament in a similar manner to public legislation, but there are a number of additional elements to the process. Further information is available in the House of Commons Library's background paper on Private Bills.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> [House of Commons Background Paper: Private Bills, SN06508](#)

**Table 2: Private Bills, 1997-98 to 2010-12**

Session	Private Bills introduced <sup>a</sup>	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
2008-09	7	1
2009-10	10	3
2010-12	10	4

**Notes:**

(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

**1.3 Delegated legislation**

The most common form of delegated legislation (sometimes also called ‘subordinate legislation’ or ‘secondary legislation’) is the Statutory Instrument (SI). The Parliamentary procedure for SIs 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 numbers of SIs (many of which are not considered by or laid before Parliament) have been increasing. The number of pages of legislation for both categories has been higher in recent years compared to 40 years ago (see section 1.4 for details).

The form of Parliamentary involvement in delegated legislation, most of which is carried out using 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 subsequently, in practice, not debated and, of those that are, the majority are discussed not on the floor of the House of Commons but in a Delegated Legislation Committee, after which they are reported to the House and voted on without any further debate.

It should be noted that the principles behind all SIs receive some degree of Parliamentary scrutiny when their parent Act was passed by Parliament, even if the SI itself requires little or no additional consideration before coming into force.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> For more information on statutory instruments see:

**Table 3: Acts and registered Statutory Instruments, 1950 to 2012**

<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Acts</b>	<b>Statutory Instruments</b>	<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Acts</b>	<b>Statutory Instruments</b>	
1950	50	2,144				
1951	64	2,335	1982	57	1,900	
1952	64	2,312	1983	60	1,965	
1953	56	1,937	1984	62	2,072	
1954	66	1,764	1985	76	2,080	
1955	49	2,007	1986	68	2,344	
1956	59	2,122	1987	57	2,278	
1957	62	2,250	1988	55	2,311	
1958	77	2,280	1989	46	2,503	
1959	73	2,342	1990	46	2,667	
1960	66	2,495	1991	69	2,953	
1961	65	2,514	1992	61	3,359	
1962	60	2,877	1993	52	3,276	
1963	59	2,157	1994	41	3,334	
1964	98	2,102	1995	54	3,345	
1965	83	2,201	1996	63	3,291	
1966	52	1,641	1997	69	3,114	
1967	91	1,976	1998	49	3,319	<b>Scottish SIs</b>
1968	77	2,079	1999	35	3,488	204
1969	65	1,902	2000	45	3,433	454
1970	58	2,044	2001	25	4,150	494
1971	81	2,178	2002	44	3,279	575
1972	80	2,077	2003	45	3,367	622
1973	69	2,236	2004	38	3,459	566
1974	58	2,227	2005	24	3,602	667
1975	83	2,251	2006	55	3,515	625
1976	86	2,248	2007	31	3,688	440
1977	53	2,202	2008	33	3,371	441
1978	59	1,977	2009	27	3,468	455
1979	60	1,770	2010	41	3,117	471
1980	68	2,051	2011	25	3,136	458
1981	72	1,892	2012	23	3,328	287

**Notes**

Excludes Northern Ireland Acts and statutory rules

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

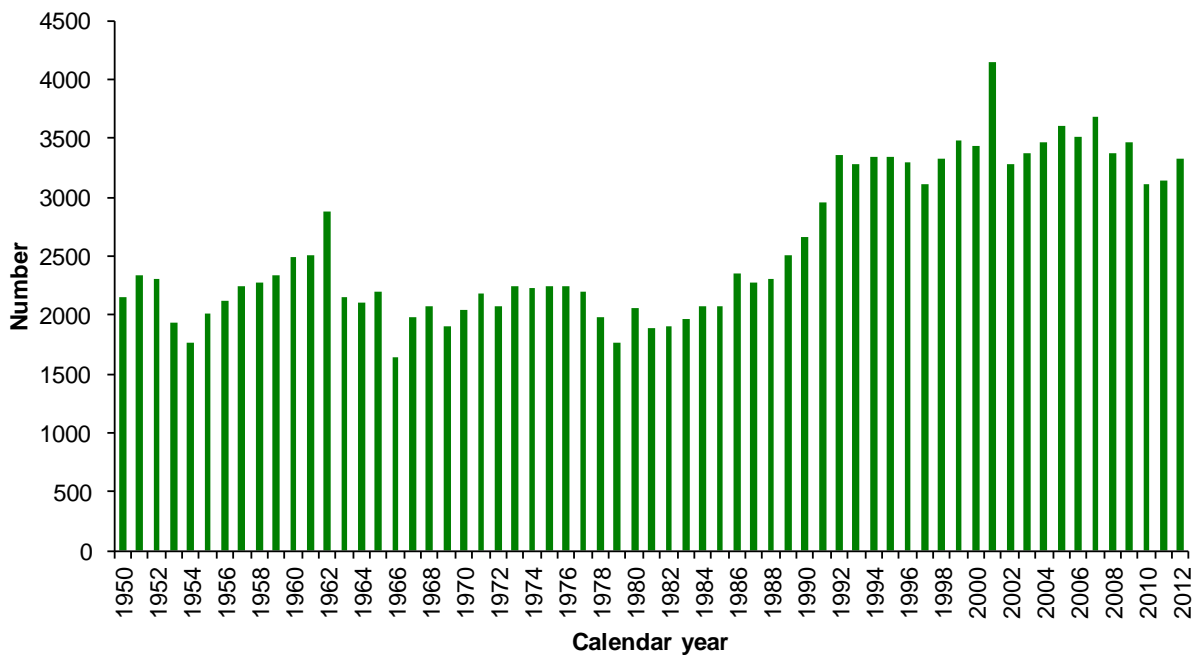
**Source**

House of Commons Library

Office of Public Sector Information

[www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

## Statutory Instruments Registered 1950-2012



The graph above shows that the number of registered SIs started to increase slowly from 1979 and the number has remained at a consistently higher level since 1992.

**Table 4: Statutory Instruments considered before Parliament by session, 1997-98 to 2010-12**

Session	Number laid before House	Considered in the House	Considered in Delegated Legislation Committee
1997-98	1,855	34	179
1998-99	1,478	22	177
1999-00	1,456	21	174
2000-01	868	15	122
2001-02	1,788	15	258
2002-03	1,416	13	240
2003-04	1,281	9	185
2004-05	792	6	117
2005-06	1,885	19	270
2006-07	1,371	12	201
2007-08	1,319	17	212
2008-09	1,300	12	231
2009-10	818	12	160
2010-12	1,809	22	336

**Notes**

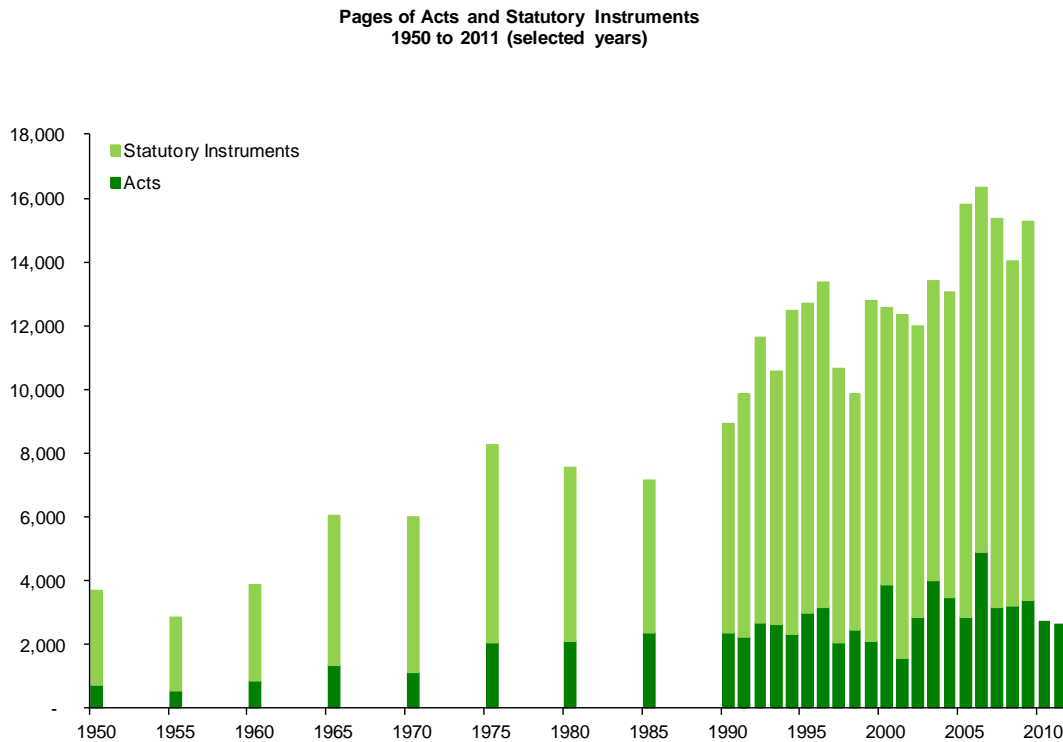
Please note that the SIs in the above table are those considered in each session but they may have been laid in a previous session

**Source**

Sessional Returns, Table 6C

## 1.4 Number of 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 SIs in the published Stationery Office volumes for selected calendar years.



While the number of Acts has been declining over the last four decades, the length of each Act has tended to increase and the overall number of pages of Acts passed remains relatively high. However, SIs have grown both in number and in overall number of pages.<sup>7</sup>

The data underpinning the chart are in the following table. Please note that bound volumes for SIs from 2010 were not available at the time of writing.

<sup>7</sup> Further information is available in the following House of Commons Library Standard Note: [Acts and Statutory Instruments: Volume of UK legislation 1950 to 2012, SN02911](#)

**Table 5: Pages of Acts and Statutory Instruments, 1911 to 2010**

	Public and General Acts	Statutory Instruments
1911	430	330
1921	220	1,080
1931	280	1,050
1940	370	1,970
1950	720	2,970
1955	540	2,340
1960	850	3,020
1965	1,340	4,730
1970	1,110	4,880
1975	2,060	6,210
1980	2,110	5,440
1985	2,380	4,760
1990	2,390	6,550
1991	2,250	7,626
1992	2,678	8,964
1993	2,645	7,944
1994	2,335	10,143
1995	3,001	9,688
1996	3,150	10,233
1997	2,060	8,599
1998	2,469	7,403
1999	2,096	10,693
2000	3,865	8,712
2001	1,594	10,760
2002	2,868	9,109
2003	4,030	9,378
2004	3,470	9,574
2005	2,868	12,933
2006	4,911	11,440
2007	3,186	12,172
2008	3,204	10,812
2009	3,384	11,888
2010	2,722	..
2011	2,630	..

**Notes:**

The figures for Statutory Instruments relate to the number of pages in the Stationery Office bound set - this excludes some local and unpublished Instruments and, from 2000, those made by the Welsh ministers.

The figures do not include Northern Ireland (Stormont) Acts, Orders in Council or Statutory Rules.

Pre-1987 figures are adjusted to current page sizes.

**Sources:**

Annual volumes of Acts and SIs published by TSO

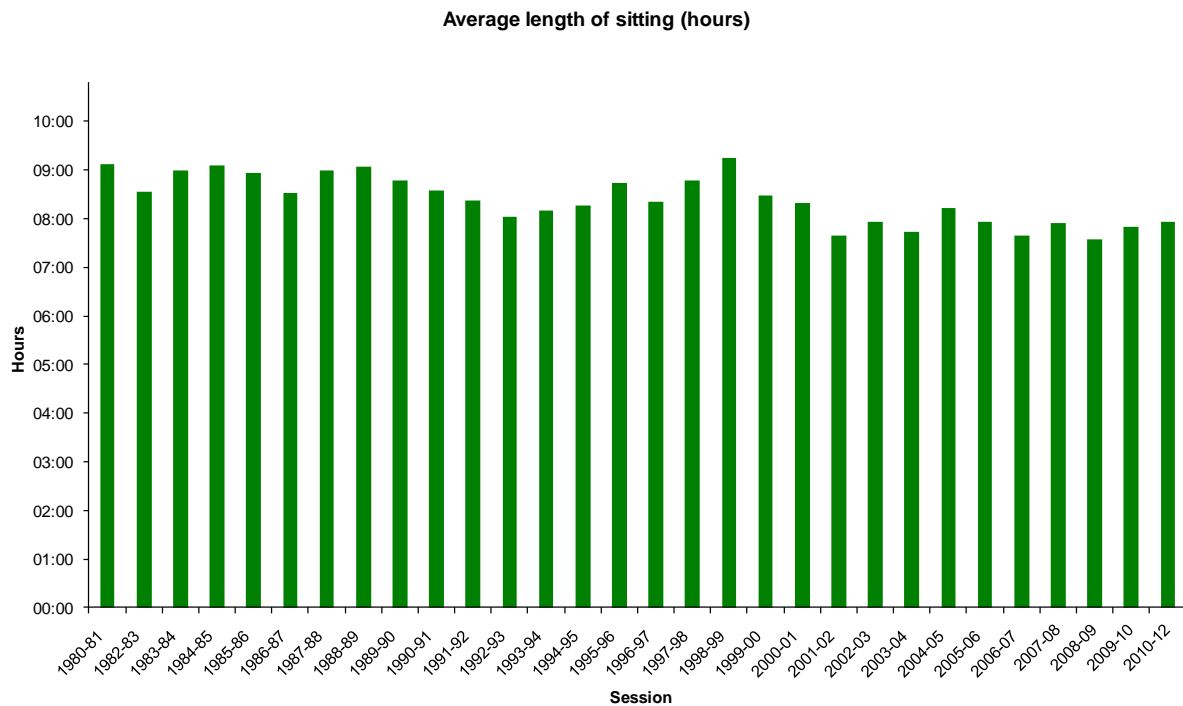


## 2 Sitting Hours and Business by Type in the House of Commons

### 2.1 Number of sitting days / average length of sitting

The chart below shows the average length of a sitting day in the House of Commons Chamber by parliamentary session from 1979-80 to 2010-12. In 1992 the *Jopling Report* recommended changes to sitting hours to reduce the number of late sittings, among other reforms,<sup>8</sup> and the House began experimenting with new arrangements from the 1994-95 session onwards.

As the chart shows, the effect of the reforms 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.<sup>9</sup> Since 2008-09 there has been a very slight increase in the average length of sitting.



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

<sup>8</sup> The Select Committee on Sittings of the House (Jopling Committee), *Report*, 18 February 1992, HC 20 1991/92

<sup>9</sup> 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 SN02854, *Modernisation: Sitting Hours*

**Table 6: Number of sitting days per session, 1980-81 to 2010-12**

Session	Number of Sitting Days	Average length of sitting (hrs:mins)
1980-81	163	09:07
1981-82	174	08:08
1982-83	115	08:34
1983-84	213	08:59
1984-85	172	09:06
1985-86	172	08:57
1986-87	109	08:32
1987-88	218	09:00
1988-89	175	09:04
1989-90	167	08:48
1990-91	160	08:35
1991-92	83	08:23
1992-93	240	08:03
1993-94	154	08:10
1994-95	159	08:16
1995-96	146	08:45
1996-97	86	08:21
1997-98	241	08:47
1998-99	149	09:15
1999-00	170	08:29
2000-01	83	08:19
2001-02	201	07:40
2002-03	162	07:57
2003-04	157	07:44
2004-05	65	08:14
2005-06	208	07:56
2006-07	146	07:40
2007-08	165	07:55
2008-09	139	07:35
2009-10	60	07:50
2010-12	295	07:57

**Notes:**

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

**Source:**

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

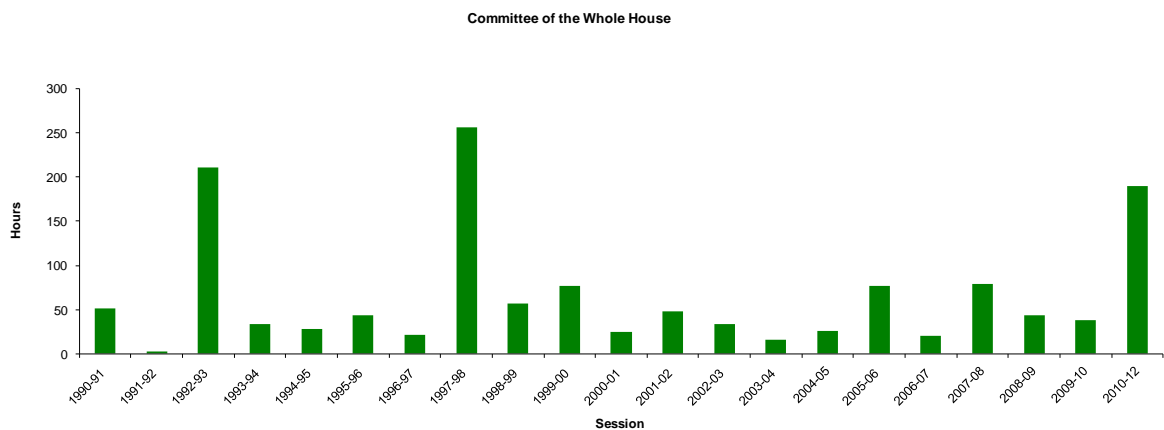
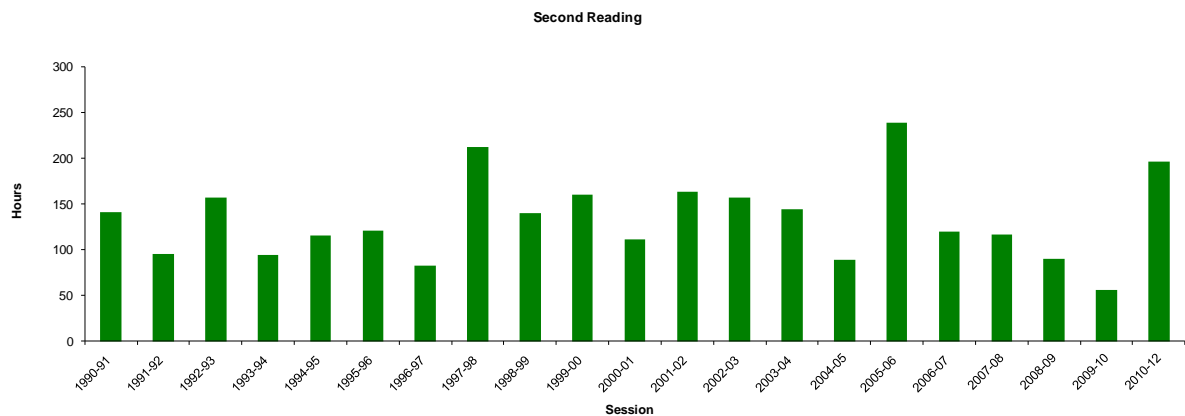
Shorter sessions in the table are due in the main to the calling of a general election in that session (for instance in 1992, 1997 and 2001). The extremely short session in 1948 was created especially to deal with the second passage of the *Parliament Bill* through both Houses.<sup>10</sup> In general, a short session is usually followed by a relatively long session.

In non-election years, and excluding the extremely short Session of 1948 and the double session of 2010-12, the House of Commons has sat on average for 179 days per session since 1944-45. The average number of sitting days for all sessions since 1944-45 is 157. The highest number of sitting days in a single session since 1944-45 was 246 days in 1966-67. The double length session of 2010-12 sat for 295 days.

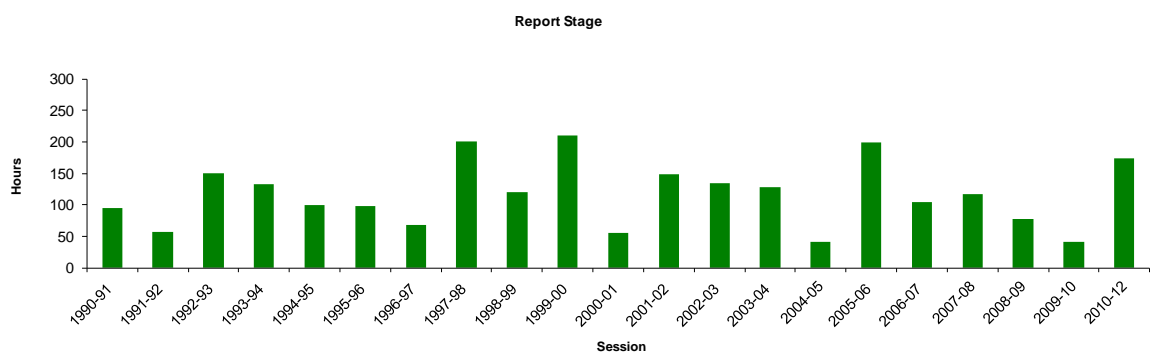
<sup>10</sup> [House of Commons Library Standard Note SN00675, The Parliament Acts](#)

## 2.2 Sitting time by business type

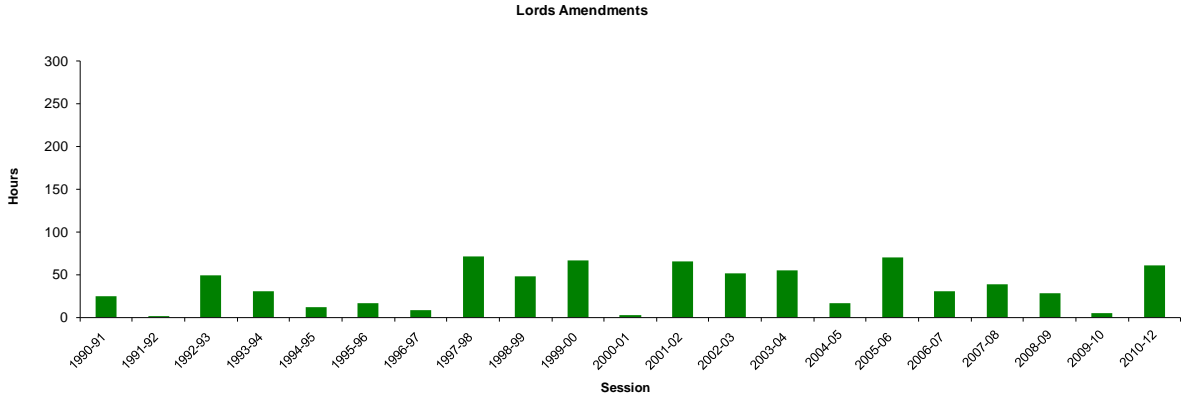
The following charts show the amount of time dedicated each Session to different stages of Government Bills on the Floor of the House.



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 major 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.

The data for these charts are in the following table:

**Table 7: Distribution of time spent on Government Bills in the House of Commons (hours)**

Session	<i>hours.minutes</i>				
	Second Reading	Committee of the Whole House	Report Stage	Third Reading	Lords Amendments
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	82.31	21.40	68.38	4.35	8.27
1997-98	212.20	255.52	201.08	25.52	71.05
1998-99	140.01	57.26	120.53	17.01	48.37
1999-00	160.19	76.56	210.37	21.58	66.29
2000-01	111.44	24.33	56.24	16.08	3.24
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	89.16	26.42	41.49	13.23	16.57
2005-06	238.18	77.18	199.51	34.53	70.29
2006-07	119.48	20.44	105.17	18.04	31.22
2007-08	116.01	79.20	117.06	15.40	38.29
2008-09	89.51	43.17	77.53	9.04	28.38
2009-10	56.31	38.08	42.04	9.10	5.49
2010-12	196.19	189.13	174.10	23.02	60.48

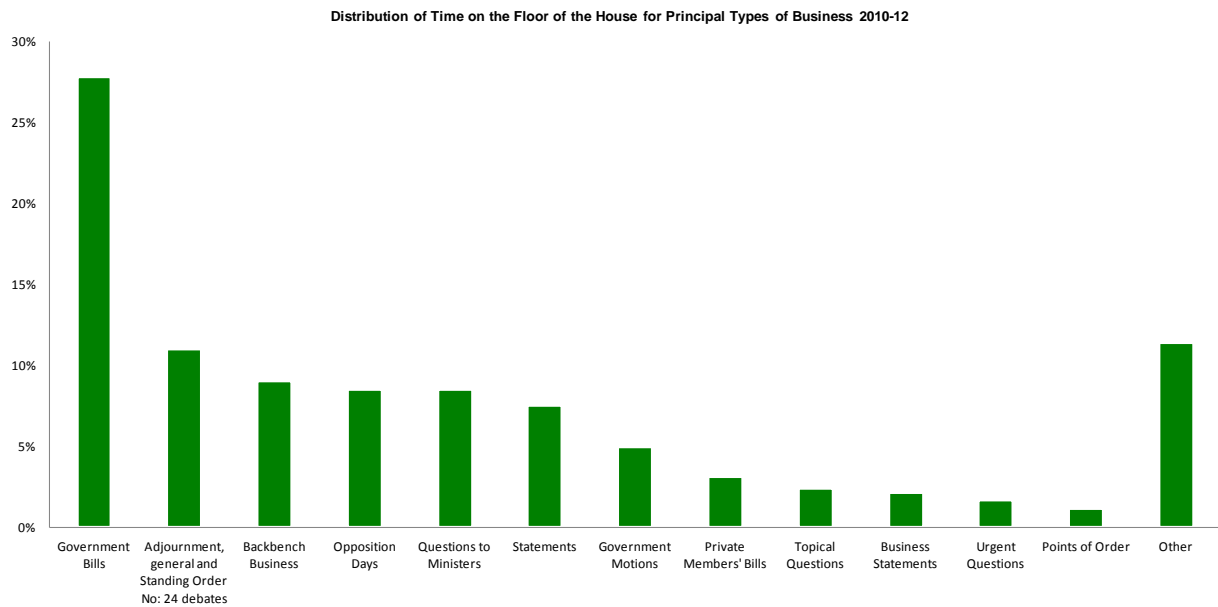
**Notes**

\* data not included in sessional return for this session

**Source:**

House of Commons *Sessional Returns*

Not all business conducted on the Floor of the House is Government business. The Backbench Business Committee was created at the start of the 2010 Parliament and has responsibility for scheduling debates on 35 days, at least 27 of which will take place in the House of Commons Chamber.<sup>11</sup> The chart below shows the distribution of time on the floor of the House for principal types of business for the 2010-12 session.



<sup>11</sup> Further information is available in the following House of Commons Library Standard Note: [The Backbench Business Committee, SN05654](#)

**Table 8: Distribution of time on the Floor of the House for principal types of business 2010-12, % of total time**

<b>Business type</b>	<b>Session 2010-12</b>
Government Bills	27.8%
Adjournment, general and Standing Order No: 24 debates	11.1%
Backbench Business	9.1%
Opposition Days	8.6%
Questions to Ministers	8.6%
Statements	7.6%
Government Motions	5.0%
Private Members' Bills	3.2%
Topical Questions	2.4%
Business Statements	2.2%
Urgent Questions	1.7%
Points of Order	1.2%
Other	11.4%
total: 100.0%	

**Notes**

Backbench Business time introduced at the beginning of the 2010 Parliament

Other includes:

Addresses other than Motions to annul or revoke Statutory Instruments; Private Business three hours before the moment of interruption; Private Members' Motions; Estimates (debates on Select Committee Reports under Standing Order No: 54); Money Resolutions; Ways and Means; Motions for the approval of Statutory Instruments; Speaker's Statements; Standing Order No. 24 Applications; Public Petitions; Daily Prayers

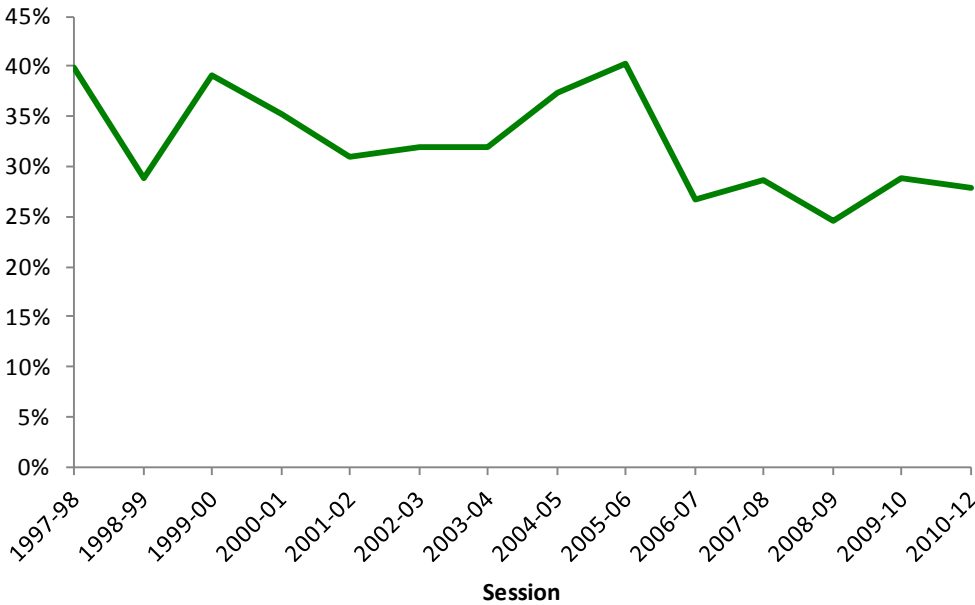
**Sources:**

Sessional Returns, 2010-12

Sessional Diary, 2010-12

Government Bills accounted for 27.8% of all time on the floor of the House in 2010-12. The percentage of time spent on Government Bills has fluctuated since 1997-98 with a peak of 40.2% in 2005-06 and a low of 24.6% in 2008-09.

**Time spent on Government Bills on the floor of the House 1997-98 to 2010-12, %**



**Table 9: Time spent on Government Bills on the floor of the House 1997-98 to 2010-12, %**

<b>Session</b>	<b>Time spent on Government Bills on the floor of the House</b>
1997-98	39.9%
1998-99	28.8%
1999-00	39.2%
2000-01	35.3%
2001-02	30.9%
2002-03	32.0%
2003-04	31.9%
2004-05	37.3%
2005-06	40.2%
2006-07	26.7%
2007-08	28.6%
2008-09	24.6%
2009-10	28.9%
2010-12	27.8%

**Sources:**

Sessional Returns, 1997-98 to 2010-12

Sessional Diary, 2010-12

### **3 The Work of Members of Parliament**

#### **3.1 Divisions in the House of Commons**

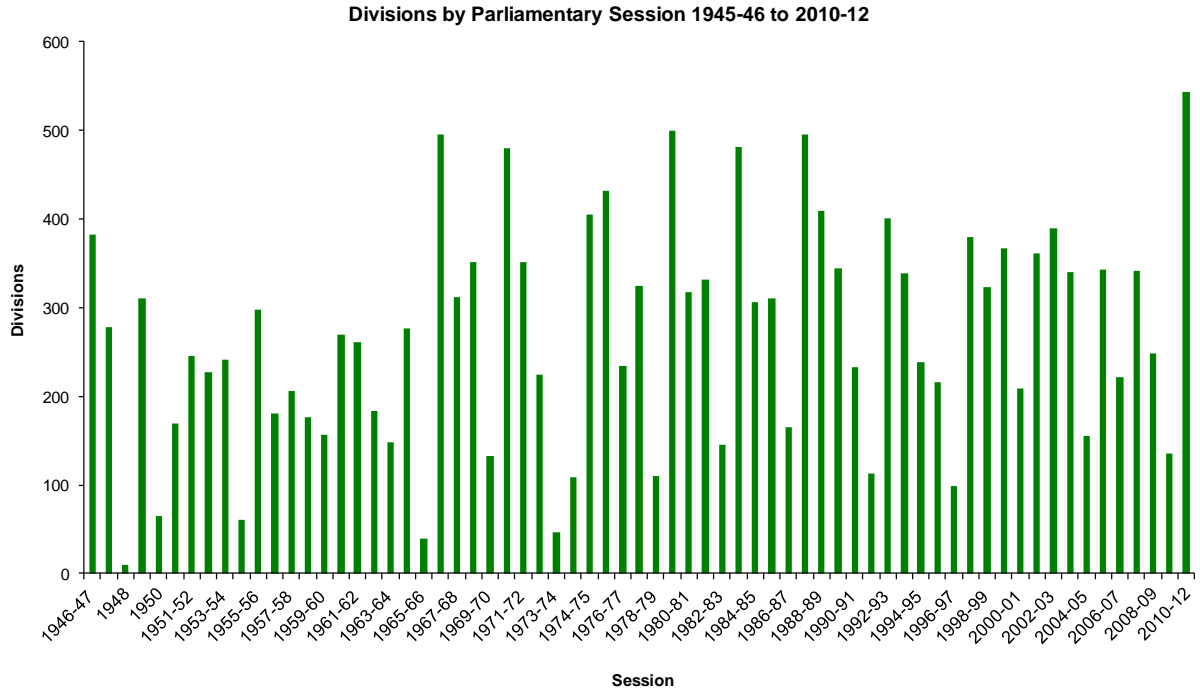
A division is the method by which a vote by Members of the House of Commons is conducted. Divisions can be on legislative or non-legislative motions put before the House. It should be noted that the House of Commons can make decisions without formally dividing.

Figures for the number of divisions in the Commons per session since 1945 show that the Commons divided relatively often during the 1945-51 Governments led by Clement Attlee. 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. The double length session of 2010-12 has had the most divisions since 1946, although not significantly more than the previous top five most divided sessions or 1967-68, 1971-72, 1980-81, 1984-85 and 1988-89.

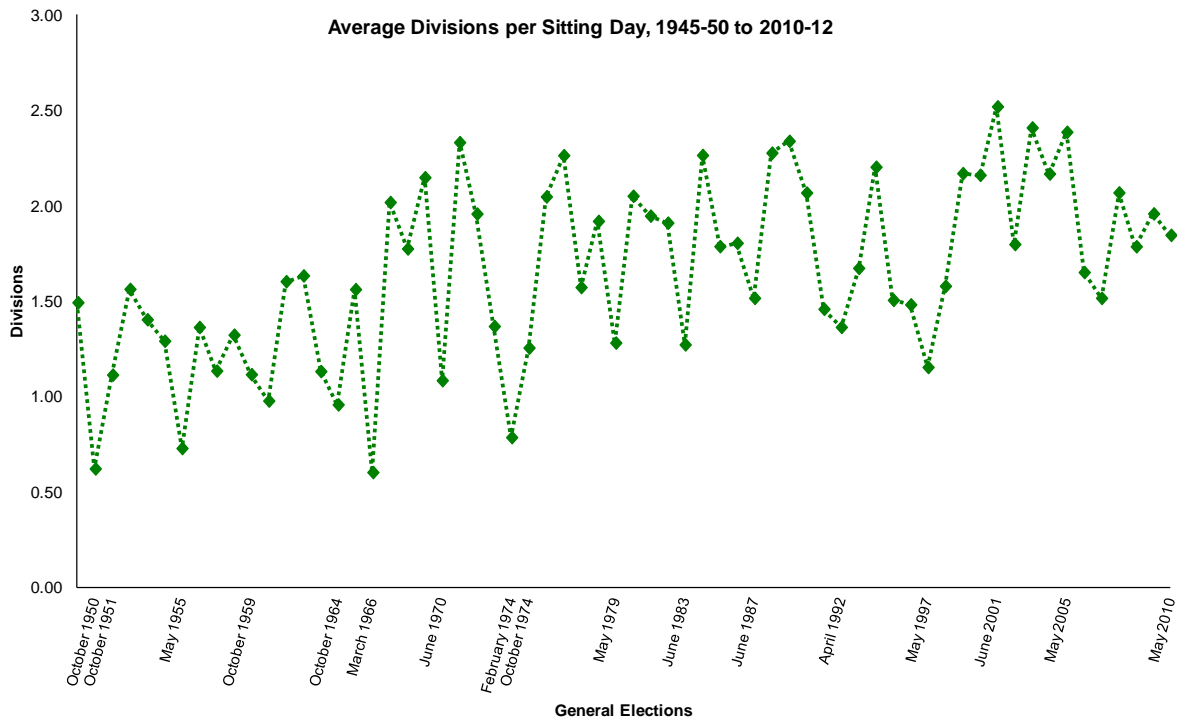
In the House of Commons some divisions are deferred. This means that Members can vote on a series of motions using ballot papers at a convenient time (currently from 12.30pm on Wednesdays) instead of holding divisions at the time the question is put. Business subject to this procedure includes motions on statutory instruments and on certain types of motion which are not subject to amendment. Proceedings on Bills are excluded from this procedure. Further information on divisions is available in the Library's background paper.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> [House of Commons Background Paper: Divisions in the House of Commons, SN06401](#)



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 following table:

**Table 10: Number of divisions by session, 1945-46 to 2010-12**

<b>Session</b>	<b>Number of divisions</b>	<b>Session</b>	<b>Number of divisions</b>
1945-46	294	1977-78	324
1946-47	383	1978-79	110
1947-48	278	1979-80	500
1948	10	1980-81	317
1948-49	310	1981-82	332
1950	65	1982-83	146
1950-51	170	1983-84	482
1951-52	245	1984-85	307
1952-53	227	1985-86	310
1953-54	241	1986-87	165
1954-55	61	1987-88	496
1955-56	298	1988-89	409
1956-57	180	1989-90	345
1957-58	206	1990-91	233
1958-59	177	1991-92	113
1959-60	156	1992-93	401
1960-61	269	1993-94	339
1961-62	261	1994-95	239
1962-63	183	1995-96	216
1963-64	148	1996-97	99
1964-65	276	1997-98	380
1965-66	39	1998-99	323
1966-67	496	1999-00	367
1967-68	312	2000-01	209
1968-69	352	2001-02	361
1969-70	132	2002-03	390
1970-71	480	2003-04	340
1971-72	352	2004-05	155
1972-73	224	2005-06	343
1973-74	47	2006-07	221
1974	109	2007-08	341
1974-75	405	2008-09	248
1975-76	432	2009-10	135
1976-77	234	2010-12	544

**Note:**

Includes deferred divisions

**Source**

Sessional Information Digest

Hansard

### 3.2 Westminster Hall debates

Westminster Hall was established as a parallel debating chamber in 1999-00 following a recommendation from the Modernisation Committee.<sup>13</sup> The first debates were held in November 1999; four and a half hours are available for adjournment debates initiated by back-benchers, each day, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and three hours are available on Thursdays for debates on Select Committee reports or on a subject chosen by the Government 2009-10 and by the Backbench Business Committee since 2010-12.

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

**Table 11: Sittings in Westminster Hall, 1999-00 to 2010-12**

<b>Session</b>	<b>Total sitting time (hours and minutes)</b>
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
2008-09	337.48
2009-10 (a)	166.39
2010-12 (b)	741.38

**Notes**

(a) Short session

(b) Long session

**Source**

Sessional returns of the House of Commons

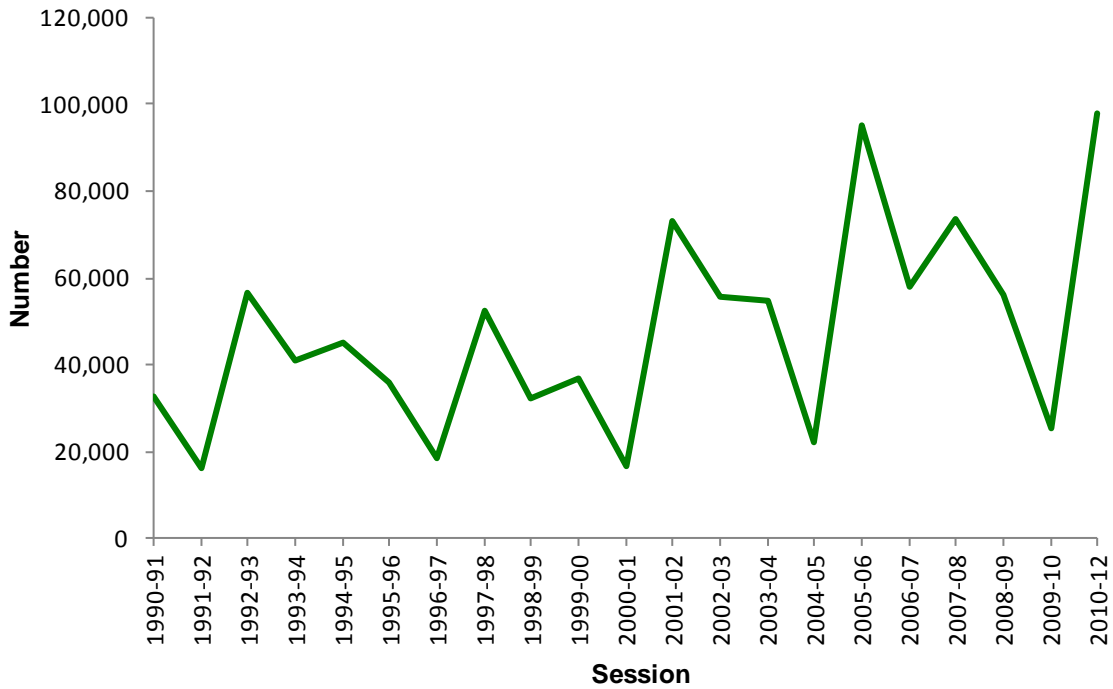
### 3.3 Parliamentary questions

MPs can ask questions to Government Ministers by tabling Parliamentary Questions (PQs). These may be asked at oral question sessions, or questions for written reply may be tabled. The number of oral PQs answered is stable, since the time set aside for answering of oral PQs has not significantly changed in recent years.<sup>14</sup> The graph below shows a general trend of increasing numbers of Written Parliamentary Questions (WPQs) answered in each session since 1990-91; albeit within the election cycle of depressing the number in the short pre-election session and increasing it in the typically longer first post-election session.

<sup>13</sup> Modernisation of the House of Commons Committee, *Parliamentary Calendar: Initial Proposals*, HC 60 1998-99

<sup>14</sup> Statistics are derived from the Parliamentary Information Management Service (PIMS) and its successor, Parliamentary Search, along with the Sessional Returns published by the House

**Written Parliamentary Questions answered by session in the House of Commons, 1990-91 to 2010-12**



However, when one looks at WPQs answered per sitting day the pattern is different. The number rose sharply between the 2000-01 and 2001-02 sessions and then rose again after 2005-06 session. However, since 2007-08 the number of WPQs answered per sitting day has declined; although it remains significantly higher than the pre-2001 level.

**Written Parliamentary Questions answered per sitting day, by session, in the House of Commons, 1990-91 to 2010-12**



**Table 12: House of Commons Parliamentary Questions, 1990-91 to 2010-12**

Session	Oral	Written	Urgent	Private Notice
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	...
2008-09	1,314	56,192	11	...
2009-10	962	25,467	26	...
2010-12	4,710	97,753	73	...

**Notes**

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/PIMS

Private Notice Questions were renamed Urgent Questions with no procedural change in their function or execution. Urgent Questions are those which have not appeared on the Order Paper for that day's business but have been granted time by the Speaker under Standing Order No. 21 (2). The number of Urgent Questions granted under the current Speaker (elected 22 June 2009) has increased. In a speech at the University of Birmingham, entitled *The House of Commons – On the Road to Recovery* (2 February 2012), he made the following comments on Urgent Questions:

...I do not apologise for restoring this instrument of scrutiny. I believe the evidence demonstrates that it has helped revive the standing of the House by demonstrating its relevance.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *The House of Commons – On the Road to Recovery*, Speech by the Speaker of the House of Commons at the University of Birmingham, 2 February 2012

**Table 13: House of Commons Parliamentary Questions, 1990-91 to 2010-12 (per sitting day)**

<b>Session</b>	<b>Written questions answered per sitting day</b>	<b>Oral questions answered per day</b>
1990-91	205.3	19
1991-92	193.4	18
1992-93	235.6	17
1993-94	266.6	20
1994-95	283.0	19
1995-96	245.5	17
1996-97	214.4	16
1997-98	218.5	17
1998-99	215.8	15
1999-00	216.4	15
2000-01	201.4	13
2001-02	362.7	14
2002-03	342.2	10
2003-04	349.5	14
2004-05	343.0	15
2005-06	456.9	14
2006-07	396.1	14
2007-08	444.6	18
2008-09	404.3	10
2009-10	369.1	13
2010-12	331.4	18

**Source**

House of Commons Sessional Returns/PIMS

Supplementary oral questions are excluded from the above table.

The Government departments which answered the most written questions in the 2010-12 Session are listed below. The Department of Health has answered the highest number of written PQs in six out of the last eight sessions, often by a significant margin. The volume of PQs that a department receives will be related both to the concerns of Members and to the legislative agenda.

**Table 14: Written parliamentary questions answered by the top 10 departments, 2010-12**

<b>Department</b>	<b>number WPQs</b>	<b>% of all WPQs</b>
Department of Health	10,044	10.2%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	7,733	7.9%
Department for Work and Pensions	7,202	7.3%
Home Office	6,945	7.1%
Treasury	6,727	6.9%
Ministry of Defence	6,515	6.6%
Ministry of Justice	6,389	6.5%
Department for Education	6,203	6.3%
Department for Transport	6,095	6.2%
Communities and Local Government	5,224	5.3%

**Source**

PIMS

Parliamentary Search

*Numbers by Financial Year*

The House of Commons Commission also publishes information on the number of questions by financial year. It is important to note that the figures below relate not to WPQs answered but to WPQs dealt with by the Table Office (as reported in the House of Commons Commission annual reports).

The report for 2005/06 noted that “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 by the 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 do not go on to be formally ‘tabled’ (not every WPQ handled by the Table Office will go on actually to be asked of a Minister). The proportion of questions which were e-tabled increased from 15 per cent in 2003/04 to 69% for 2011/12.

**Table 15: Written Parliamentary Questions tabled by financial year, 2001/02 to 2010/12**

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>Average number of questions dealt with by the Table Office per sitting day</b>	<b>Number of Members who have used e-tabling facility<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Percentage of questions e-tabled</b>	<b>Total number of written answers published</b>
2001/02	460	...	...	42,088
2002/03	463	45	6%	51,978
2003/04	472	102	15%	50,032
2004/05	456	153	21%	49,562
2005/06	596	300	30%	61,477
2006/07	605	334	36%	63,451
2007/08	591	268	38%	63,641
2008/09	619	255	46%	73,601
2009/10	455	266	58%	55,615
2010/11	544	357	60%	46,825
2011/12	515	368	69%	48,201

**Notes**

<sup>a</sup>e-tabling introduced on 01.01.2003

**Source:**

House of Commons Commission, Annual report

Following the pilot in September 2006, the tabling and answering of written questions during appointed days of the summer recess was put on a permanent basis: in September 2007, over 770 questions were processed by the Table Office, and printed in dedicated editions of Hansard. However since 2010 the House has sat for the first two weeks of September prior to a two week recess for the party conferences.

A restriction was placed on the total number of questions that a Member could table using the e-tabling system. In July 2012 the 2011/12 Annual Report of the House of Commons Commission noted:

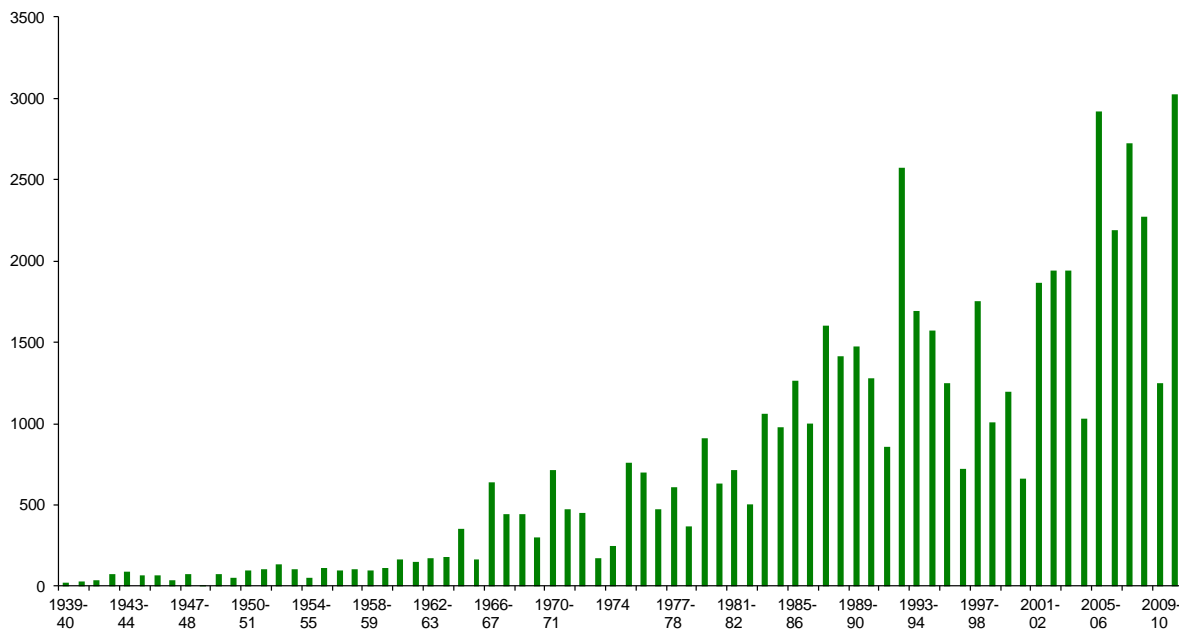
During 2011/12 the volume of Parliamentary Questions remained at historically high levels, although the imposition of a limit on the number of questions Members can table electronically (five written questions per Member per day) can be viewed as serving as a reminder that quantity alone does not guarantee accountability.<sup>16</sup>

On 18 December 2012 the Procedure Committee published its third report of 2010-12 on the E-Tabling system.<sup>17</sup> The Committee recommended that the limit be raised from five to 20 e-tabled questions per day, a recommendation which the Government did not take a view on, stating that this would be something for the House itself to consider.<sup>18</sup> A motion to this effect was put before the House on 26 March 2013 and agreed to.<sup>19</sup>

### 3.4 Early Day Motions

Early Day Motions, or EDMs, are formal motions put before the House of Commons for debate. In practice very few EDMs are ever actually debated. EDMs are therefore used primarily by MPs to raise awareness of a particular issue and to highlight the subject in the press. They are also seen as a way for Members to register an opinion publicly. As the chart below shows, the number of EDMs tabled has grown significantly since the 1960s.<sup>20</sup>

EDMs per session, 1939-40 to 2010-12



<sup>16</sup> House of Commons, *Thirty Fourth report of the House of Commons Commission - Financial Year 2011/12*, July 2012, HC 518, p13,

<sup>17</sup> Procedure Committee, E-tabling of written questions, Third Report of Session 2012–13, December 2012, HC 775

<sup>18</sup> Response from the Leader of the House of Commons to the Committee's 3rd Report on E-tabling of written questions, February 2013;

<sup>19</sup> [HC Deb c1604](#), 26 March 2013,

<sup>20</sup> Further information is available on EDMs from the [Parliament website](#).

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

**Table 16: Number of Early Day Motions tabled, 1939-40 to 2010-12**

Session	EDMs	Session	EDMs	Session	EDMs
1939-40	21	1963-64	180	1987-88 (b)	1,600
1940-41	30	1964-65	356	1988-89	1,414
1941-42	41	1965-66 (a)	164	1989-90	1,478
1942-43	77	1966-67 (b)	640	1990-91	1,283
1943-44	88	1967-68	446	1991-92 (a)	860
1944-45	64	1968-69	443	1992-93 (b)	2,574
1945-46	71	1969-70 (a)	300	1993-94	1,691
1946-47	37	1970-71 (b)	717	1994-95	1,575
1947-48	79	1971-72	474	1995-96	1,246
1948 (c)	3	1972-73	448	1996-97 (a)	724
1948-49	77	1973-74 (a)	174	1997-98 (b)	1,757
1949-50	55	1974 (b)	245	1998-99	1,009
1950-51	97	1974-75	759	1999-00	1,198
1951-52	106	1975-76	701	2000-01 (a)	659
1952-53	135	1976-77	475	2001-02 (b)	1,864
1953-54	102	1977-78	611	2002-03	1,939
1954-55	52	1978-79 (a)	368	2003-04	1,941
1955-56	116	1979-80 (b)	907	2004-05 (a)	1,033
1956-57	96	1980-81	631	2005-06 (b)	2,924
1957-58	105	1981-82	716	2006-07	2,193
1958-59	99	1982-83 (a)	502	2007-08	2,727
1959-60	111	1983-84 (b)	1,058	2008-09 (a)	2,272
1960-61	169	1984-85	979	2009-10	1,248
1961-62	154	1985-86	1,261	2010-12 (b)	3,024
1962-63	176	1986-87 (a)	999		

**Notes:**

<sup>(a)</sup>short session

<sup>(b)</sup>long session

<sup>(c)</sup>very short session

**Source:**

Sessional Returns

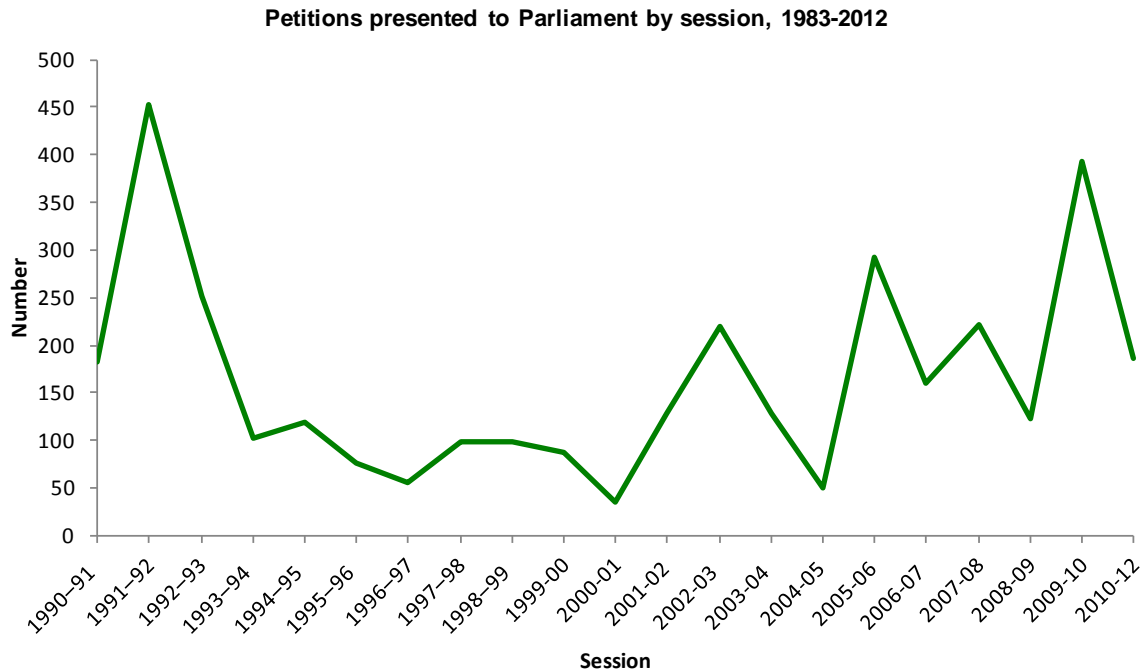
### 3.5 Petitions

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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup> Note that these petitions represent a procedure that is distinct from the Government's e-petitions system.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> A guide to presenting a public petition to the House of Commons is available on Parliament's website: <http://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/have-your-say/petitioning/public-petitions/>

<sup>22</sup> <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/>





Between the sessions of 1991-92 and 1993-94 the number of petitions fell from a peak of 452 to 102. From 1993-94 until 2001-02 the number of petitions presented remained at this lower baseline until starting to increase again. The fall in numbers between 2009-10 and 2010-12 (especially considering the length of the 2010-12 session) may be related to the establishment of the Government's own e-petitions system.<sup>23</sup>

Further information on petitioning Parliament can be found on the Parliamentary website.<sup>24</sup>

**Table 17: Petitions presented to the House of Commons since 1990-91**

Session	Number	Session	Number
1990-91	183	2001-02	129
1991-92	452	2002-03	220
1992-93	251	2003-04	128
1993-94	102	2004-05	51
1994-95	119	2005-06	293
1995-96	77	2006-07	161
1996-97	55	2007-08	221
1997-98	99	2008-09	123
1998-99	99	2009-10	393
1999-00	87	2010-12	187
2000-01	36		

**Source**

House of Commons fact sheet P7: *Petitions*;

PIMS

Sessional Returns

<sup>23</sup> <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/>

<sup>24</sup> Petitioning; <http://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/have-your-say/petitioning/>

## 4 Numbers and Characteristics of Members of the House of Commons

### 4.1 Numbers

Permanent machinery for redistributing Parliamentary seats was instituted after the Speaker's conference of 1944. Since then regular boundary reviews have been undertaken to ensure a broadly equal distribution of electors between constituencies. Separate Boundary Commissions undertake reviews in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. These changes take effect at general elections. The table below shows the distribution of seats at general elections when the number of seats has been changed.

**Table 18: Number of Westminster MPs by country since 1832**

General election	England		Wales		Scotland		Ireland/Northern Ireland		Total seats
	Number		Number		Number		Number		
1832	468	71.1%	32	4.9%	53	8.1%	105	16.0%	658
1844 <sup>1</sup>	466	71.0%	32	4.9%	53	8.1%	105	16.0%	656
1852 <sup>1</sup>	464	70.9%	32	4.9%	53	8.1%	105	16.1%	654
1861	466	71.0%	32	4.9%	53	8.1%	105	16.0%	656
1865	468	71.1%	32	4.9%	53	8.1%	105	16.0%	658
1868	460	69.9%	33	5.0%	60	9.1%	105	16.0%	658
1870	456	69.9%	33	5.1%	60	9.2%	103	15.8%	652
1885 <sup>2</sup>	452	69.8%	33	5.1%	60	9.3%	103	15.9%	648
1885 <sup>3</sup>	461	68.8%	34	5.1%	72	10.7%	103	15.4%	670
1918	492	69.6%	36	5.1%	74	10.5%	105	14.9%	707
1922 <sup>4</sup>	492	80.0%	36	5.9%	74	12.0%	13	2.1%	615
1945	517	80.8%	36	5.6%	74	11.6%	13	2.0%	640
1950	506	81.0%	36	5.8%	71	11.4%	12	1.9%	625
1955	511	81.1%	36	5.7%	71	11.3%	12	1.9%	630
1974	516	81.3%	36	5.7%	71	11.2%	12	1.9%	635
1983	523	80.5%	38	5.8%	72	11.1%	17	2.6%	650
1992 <sup>5</sup>	524	80.5%	38	5.8%	72	11.1%	17	2.6%	651
1997	529	80.3%	40	6.1%	72	10.9%	18	2.7%	659
2005	529	81.9%	40	6.2%	59	9.1%	18	2.8%	646
2010	533	82.0%	40	6.2%	59	9.1%	18	2.8%	650

#### Notes

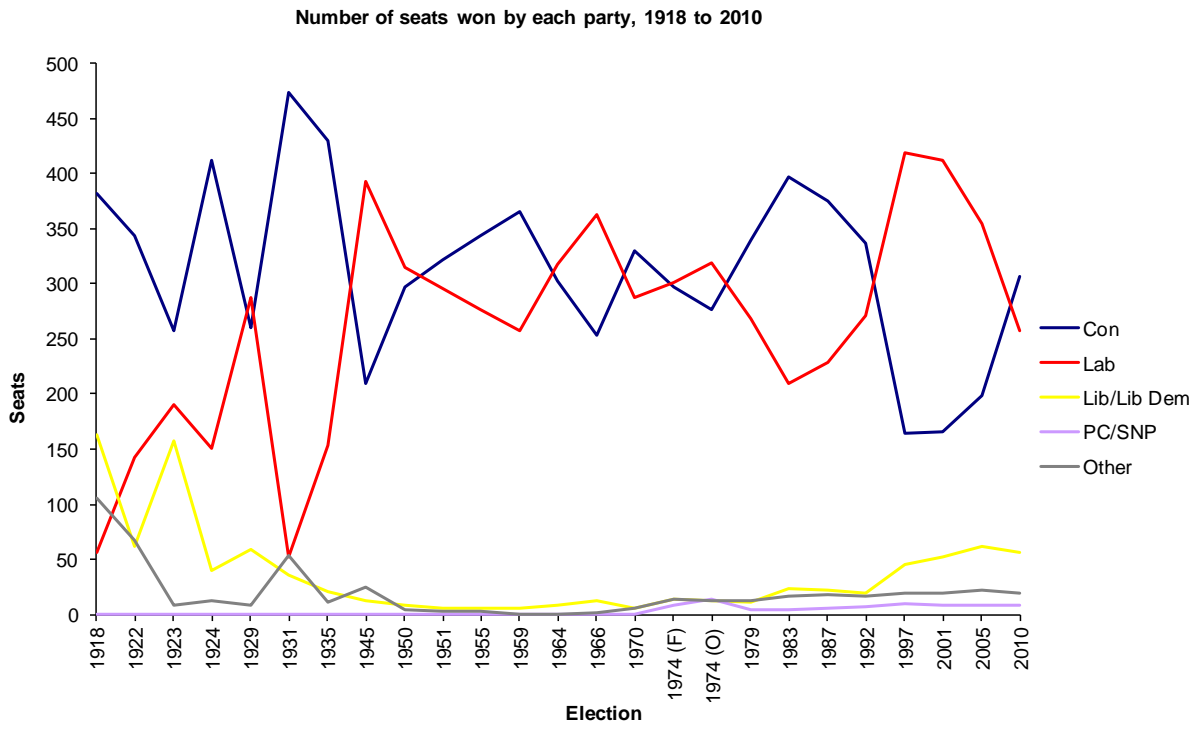
1. The writs of summons for two seats were suspended
2. Changes in June 1885
3. Changes at UK General Election November-December 1885
4. Establishment of the Republic of Ireland
5. Milton Keynes was divided into two seats

#### Source

Rallings & Thrasher, British Electoral Facts 1832-2006

**By party**

The party composition of the House of Commons since 1918 is shown in the following chart and table:<sup>25</sup>



<sup>25</sup> Elections are not covered in detail by this paper. For more detail, see House of Commons Research Paper 12/43, [Election Statistics: UK 1918-2012](#) and others in the elections series

**Table 19: Seats won by party at general elections, 1918 to 2010**

General election		CON <sup>2</sup>	LAB	LIB <sup>3</sup>	PC/SNP	Other	Total
1918	<sup>4</sup>	382	57	163	..	105	707
1922		344	142	115	..	14	615
1923		258	191	158	..	8	615
1924		412	151	40	..	12	615
1929		260	287	59	0	9	615
1931		522	52	36	0	5	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	Feb	297	301	14	9	14	635
1974	Oct	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
2010		306	258	57	9	20	650

**Notes**

1. For elections up to 1992, the Speaker of the House of Commons is listed under the party he represented before his appointment. From 1997 the Speaker is listed under 'Other'.
2. Includes Coalition Conservative for 1918; National, National Liberal and National Labour candidates for 1931-1935; National and National Liberal candidates for 1945; National Liberal & Conservative candidates 1945-1970.
3. Includes Coalition Liberal Party for 1918; National Liberal for 1922; and Independent Liberal for 1931. Figures show Liberal/SDP Alliance vote for 1983-1987 and Liberal Democrat vote from 1992 onwards.
4. 1918 figures include all of Ireland.

**Sources**

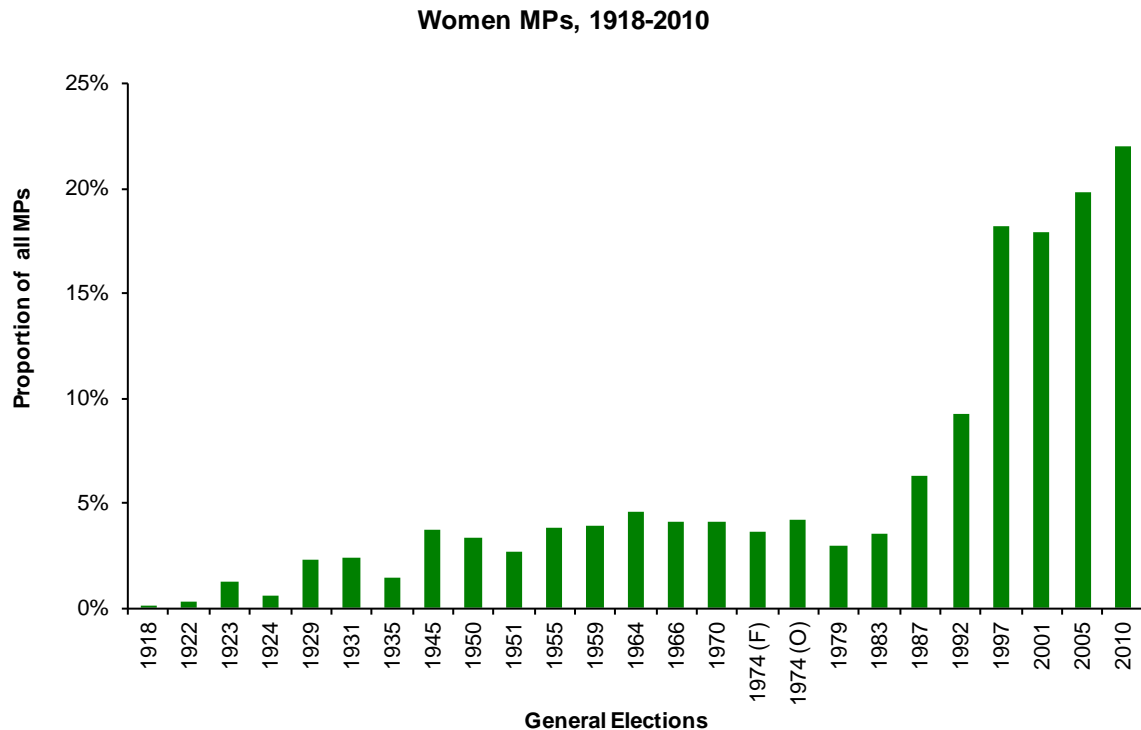
Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher, *British Electoral Facts 1832-2006*  
House of Commons Library, RP10/36 *General Election 2010*

### **By gender**

The first female MP Countess Constance Markievicz was elected for Sinn Féin at the 14 December 1918 general election for the constituency of Dublin, St. Patrick's. However, she did not take her seat. The first female MP to take her seat was Viscountess Nancy Astor who was elected 15 November 1919 for the constituency of Plymouth, Sutton.<sup>26</sup>

In 1987 there were 41 women MPs, making up 6% of all MPs. The number of women MPs rose over the next two parliaments to 120 in 1997, and to 143 following the 2010 general election. Women now represent 22% of all MPs, a record proportion.

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



<sup>26</sup> A full list of female MPs is available in the House of Commons Library [Background Paper: Women Members of Parliament](#), SN06652. Further details on women in the House commons is available in the House of Commons Library [Background Paper: Women in the House of Commons](#), SN06651

**Table 20: Women MPs after general elections, 1918 to 2010**

	Number				Percentage of party total			
	Lab	Con	LibDem	Other	Lab	Con	LibDem	Other
1918	0	0	0	1	0%	0%	0%	1%
1922	0	1	1	0	0%	0%	1%	0%
1923	3	3	2	0	2%	1%	1%	0%
1924	1	3	0	0	1%	1%	0%	0%
1929	9	3	1	1	3%	1%	2%	11%
1931	0	13	1	1	0%	2%	3%	20%
1935	1	6	1	1	1%	1%	5%	9%
1945	21	1	1	1	5%	0%	8%	4%
1950	14	6	0	1	4%	2%	0%	25%
1951	11	6	0	0	4%	2%	0%	0%
1955	14	10	0	0	5%	3%	0%	0%
1959	13	12	0	0	5%	3%	0%	0%
1964	18	11	0	0	6%	4%	0%	0%
1966	19	7	0	0	5%	3%	0%	0%
1970	10	15	0	1	3%	5%	0%	14%
1974 (F)	13	9	0	1	4%	3%	0%	4%
1974 (O)	18	7	0	2	6%	3%	0%	7%
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%
2010	81	49	7	6	31%	16%	12%	21%

**Source**

Women in Parliament and Government, House of Commons Library Standard Note, SN01250

Since 1945, Labour returned more female MPs than the Conservatives at almost every general election, the exceptions being 1970 and 1983. The 2010 general election saw women rise from 9% to 16% of the total number of Conservative MPs. The percentage of Labour MPs who are women rose slightly from 28% to 31% and the percentage of Liberal Democrat MPs who are women fell slightly from 16% to 12%.

Between the 2010 Election and May 2013, one Conservative woman MP stood down and five women Labour MPs were elected at by-elections. That leaves the parties' female representation as follows:

	number of women MPs by party				% of women MPs in each party			
	Lab	Con	LibDem	Other	Lab	Con	LibDem	Other
May 2013	86	48	7	6	33%	16%	12%	19%

### By age

The average age of MPs at election has remained relatively constant since 1979, from a low of 49.3 in 1997 to a high of 51.2 in 2005. The 2010 general election saw 129 MPs elected who were aged over 60, 20% of all Members. However the average age remained lower than any general election since 2001 due to a larger proportion of Members being elected who were aged between 18 and 39.

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

**Table 21: Average Age of MPs elected at general elections since 1979**

Election year	Average Age at election date	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
2010	49.9	9	99	191	222	109	20	650

**Source:**

House of Commons Library Research Papers: *General Election 2010 10/36, Members since 1979, 09/31*; Members Names Information Service (database)

Of those elected at the 2010 General Election, Labour MPs are older on average than those from the other major parties. 85% of Labour MPs are aged over 40; compared to 73% of Conservative and 75% of Liberal Democrats.

**Table 22: Age by party of MPs elected at the 2010 General Election**

	Number	Average age (years)			
		Under 40	41-59	60+	
Lab	258	52.4	15%	59%	26%
Con	306	47.7	23%	67%	10%
LibDem	57	50.3	25%	54%	21%
Other	29	51.1	10%	72%	17%

**Source:**

Research Paper 10/35: Members since 1979; Members Names Information Service

**By ethnicity**

The first non-white MP is likely to have been 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 (but was unseated on petition). A number of minority ethnic MPs were elected in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. 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.<sup>27</sup>

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. The 27 non-white MPs elected to the House of Commons represented 4.0% of all 650 MPs.<sup>28</sup>

Women from ethnic minorities have been particularly under-represented at Westminster. Prior to 2010, there were only two black female Members, and no Asian woman had ever been elected. The 2010 General Election saw the first Asian women MPs. The total number of minority ethnic female MPs increased by seven in 2010, and following the December 2011 by-election in Feltham and Heston the number of minority ethnic female MPs currently stands at 10 of total number of 27 BME MPs.<sup>29</sup>

**Table 23: Ethnicity of MPs elected at general elections, 1987-2010**

	LAB	CON	LD	Other	Total
<b>White</b>					
1987	225	376	22	23	646
1992	266	335	20	24	645
1997	409	165	46	30	650
2001	400	166	52	29	647
2005	342	196	62	31	631
2010	242	295	57	29	623
<b>Non-white</b>					
1987	4	0	0	0	4
1992	5	1	0	0	6
1997	9	0	0	0	9
2001	12	0	0	0	12
2005	13	2	0	0	15
2010	16	11	0	0	27
<b>Total</b>					
1987	229	376	22	23	650
1992	271	336	20	24	651
1997	418	165	46	30	659
2001	412	166	52	29	659
2005	355	198	62	31	646
2010	258	306	57	29	650

**Source:**

House of Commons Library Research Papers 08/12, 10/36

<sup>27</sup> For more information on ethnic minorities in politics, see Standard Note SN/SG/1156, [Ethnic Minorities in Politics, Government and Public Life](#), November 2008

<sup>28</sup> [General Election 2010](#), House of Commons Library Research Paper, RP10/36

<sup>29</sup> 2 Conservative and 8 Labour.



## 4.2 Occupation and education

Around one-third of MPs went to fee-paying schools. This proportion varies by party – from 14% of Labour MPs to 54% of Conservatives and 39% of Liberal Democrats. By comparison, 8% of pupils aged 11 and over in UK schools were in non-maintained (fee-paying) schools in 2010.<sup>30</sup> Around three-quarters of MPs elected in 2010 were graduates. One-quarter attended Oxford or Cambridge universities.

**Table 24: Education of Members elected in 2010 (3 main parties)**

	Lab	Con	LD
Fee-paying school	36 14%	166 54%	22 39%
University	187 72%	245 80%	46 81%
of which:			
<i>Oxford &amp; Cambridge</i>	45 17%	104 34%	16 28%

**Source:**

Kavanagh & Cowley, *The British General Election of 2010*, Table 15.5

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:

<sup>30</sup> Department for Education: [Education and Training Statistics for the UK 2010](#)

**Table 25: MPs' occupations elected at general elections 1979 to 2010 (Con, Lab, Lib Dem)**

	1979	1983	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
<i>Number</i>								
<b>Professions</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>218</b>
Barrister	67	69	57	53	36	33	34	38
Solicitor	29	35	31	30	28	35	38	48
Doctor	8	5	5	6	9	8	6	9
Civil service/local govt	30	27	22	26	37	35	28	18
Teachers: University/college	28	32	36	45	61	53	44	25
Teacher: school	49	43	48	57	65	64	47	24
<b>Business</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>222</b>
White Collar	9	21	27	46	72	76	78	84
Politician/Political organiser	21	20	34	46	60	66	87	90
Publisher/Journalist	46	45	42	44	47	50	43	38
Farmer	23	21	19	12	7	6	8	10
<b>Manual Workers</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>
Miner	21	20	17	13	13	12	11	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>621</b>
<i>Percentage</i>								
<b>Professions</b>	<b>44.9%</b>	<b>44.2%</b>	<b>41.7%</b>	<b>41.1%</b>	<b>43.2%</b>	<b>42.9%</b>	<b>39.3%</b>	<b>35.1%</b>
Barrister	10.8%	11.0%	9.1%	8.5%	5.7%	5.2%	5.5%	6.1%
Solicitor	4.7%	5.6%	4.9%	4.8%	4.5%	5.6%	6.2%	7.7%
Doctor	1.3%	0.8%	0.8%	1.0%	1.4%	1.3%	1.0%	1.4%
Civil service/local govt	4.8%	4.3%	3.5%	4.1%	5.9%	5.6%	4.6%	2.9%
Teachers: University/college	4.5%	5.1%	5.7%	7.2%	9.7%	8.4%	7.2%	4.0%
Teacher: school	7.9%	6.8%	7.6%	9.1%	10.3%	10.2%	7.6%	3.9%
<b>Business</b>	<b>22.3%</b>	<b>25.8%</b>	<b>25.6%</b>	<b>24.2%</b>	<b>18.0%</b>	<b>17.0%</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>25.1%</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>18.3%</b>	<b>21.1%</b>	<b>24.6%</b>	<b>29.9%</b>	<b>31.7%</b>	<b>35.3%</b>	<b>35.7%</b>
White Collar	1.5%	3.3%	4.3%	7.3%	11.4%	12.1%	12.7%	13.5%
Politician/Political organiser	3.4%	3.2%	5.4%	7.3%	9.5%	10.5%	14.1%	14.5%
Publisher/Journalist	7.4%	7.2%	6.7%	7.0%	7.5%	7.9%	7.0%	6.1%
Farmer	3.7%	3.3%	3.0%	1.9%	1.1%	1.0%	1.3%	1.6%
<b>Manual Workers</b>	<b>15.8%</b>	<b>11.8%</b>	<b>11.6%</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>
Miner	3.4%	3.2%	2.7%	2.1%	2.1%	1.9%	1.8%	1.1%

**Note:**

For 2010, 'White collar' includes: misc white collar; union official; public relations; and charity/voluntary sector

**Source:**

Butler, Kavanagh, Cowley et al The British General Election of 2010 & previous editions

The proportion of MPs with professional backgrounds had remained fairly constant at around 40% since 1992, but fell to 35.1% in 2010 - the lowest percentage in the data series. Within this category the proportion of former barristers has been falling since 1983 but both 2005 and 2010 saw a slight increase, whilst the proportion of former solicitors continues to rise slowly. The percentage of former teachers fell markedly from 14.8% in 2005 to 7.9% in 2010. 2010 also saw a continued rise in the proportion of MPs in the "white collar" category, which has risen year on year since 1979.

The increase in this category likely reflects the diversity in modern occupations – as is recognised by the ONS’s modern socio-economic classification. The value of this series comes from its use of a consistent set of terms over a long period of time.

**Table 26: Occupation of MPs elected at the 2010 general election**

	Con	Lab	LD
<b>Professions</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>39%</b>
Solicitor	9%	7%	4%
Barrister	9%	3%	4%
Teachers: University/college	0%	8%	7%
Teacher: school	1%	5%	11%
Civil service/local govt	1%	5%	5%
Accountant	4%	1%	4%
Armed services	5%	0%	0%
Doctor/dentist/optician	2%	1%	2%
<b>Business</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>40%</b>
Politician/Political organiser	10%	20%	12%
Publisher/Journalist	6%	6%	9%
Public relations	4%	1%	4%
<b>Manual Workers</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source**

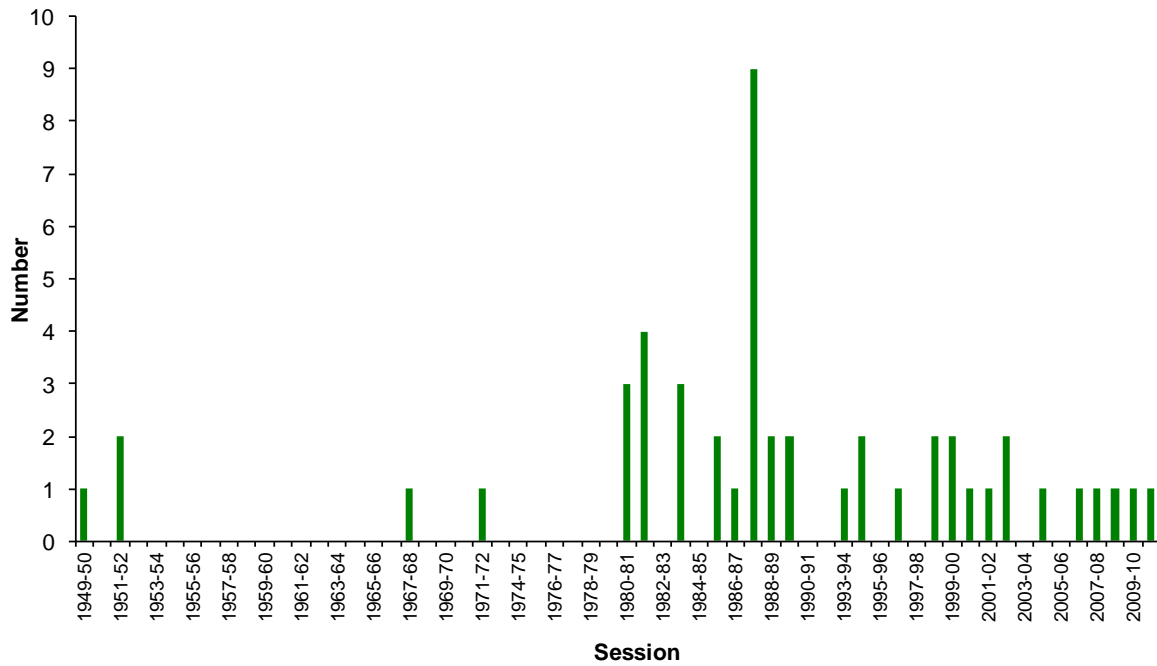
Kavanagh and Cowley, The British General Election of 2010

### 4.3 Discipline in the House of Commons

Members may be suspended from the Commons as a result of misbehaviour in the chamber, where a Member has been found to have broken the Code of Conduct for Members or where they have committed a contempt.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Further details of the disciplinary powers of the House of Commons and the processes that can lead to suspension can be found in: [House of Commons Background Paper: Disciplinary and Penal Powers of the House of Commons, SN06487](#)

Members suspended from the House of Commons, 1949-50 to 2010-12



Data on suspensions are in the following table:

Table 27: Members Suspended from the House of Commons, 1949-50 to 2010-12

Session	Number of suspensions	Session	Number of suspensions
1949-50	1	1980-81	3
1950-51	0	1981-82	4
1951-52	2	1982-83	3
1952-53	0	1983-84	0
1953-54	0	1984-85	2
1954-55	0	1985-86	1
1955-56	0	1986-87	9
1956-57	0	1987-88	2
1957-58	0	1988-89	2
1958-59	0	1989-90	2
1959-60	0	1990-91	0
1960-61	0	1992-93	0
1961-62	0	1993-94	1
1962-63	0	1994-95	2
1963-64	0	1995-96	0
1964-65	0	1996-97	1
1965-66	0	1997-98	2
1966-67	0	1998-99	2
1967-68	1	1999-00	1
1968-69	0	2000-01	1
1969-70	0	2001-02	1
1970-71	0	2002-03	2
1971-72	1	2003-04	0
1972-73	0	2004-05	1
1974-75	0	2005-06	0
1975-76	0	2006-07	1
1976-77	0	2007-08	1
1977-78	0	2008-09	1
1978-79	0	2009-10	1
1979-80	0	2010-12	1

Source

Members Suspended from the House of Commons, Parliamentary Information List, SN02430

#### 4.4 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 does not include those former Members who were re-entering the House after a period of not being an MP, sometimes referred to as 'retreads'.

**Table 28: Entrants and leavers at general elections 1979 to 2010**

General election	New MPs <sup>1</sup>	Total MPs elected	Turnover (%)
1979	116	635	18.3%
1983	150	650	23.1%
1987	121	650	18.6%
1992	127	651	19.5%
1997	243	659	36.9%
2001	92	659	14.0%
2005	119	646	18.4%
2010	227	650	34.9%

**Notes**

1. Excludes former MPs returning to the House of Commons after time away from Parliament.

**Source**

House of Commons Library MP database

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. 2010 again saw a markedly higher level of turnover than any election other than 1997.

#### ***Change in number of MPs by party***

The following table outlines seat changes by party at General Elections from 1886 to 2010. 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 affected by boundary reviews which changed the total number of seats.

**Table 29: Change in number of MPs by party at general elections, 1886 to 2010**

<b>Election</b>	<b>Conservative net change</b>	<b>Labour net change</b>	<b>Lib net change</b>	<b>Others net change</b>
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
2010	96	-90	-5	-1

**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

**Source**

Rallings & Thrasher, British Electoral Facts 1832-2006

House of Commons Library Research Papers; General Election Result 2010, RP10/36

The single largest 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 Labour leader Ramsay MacDonald.

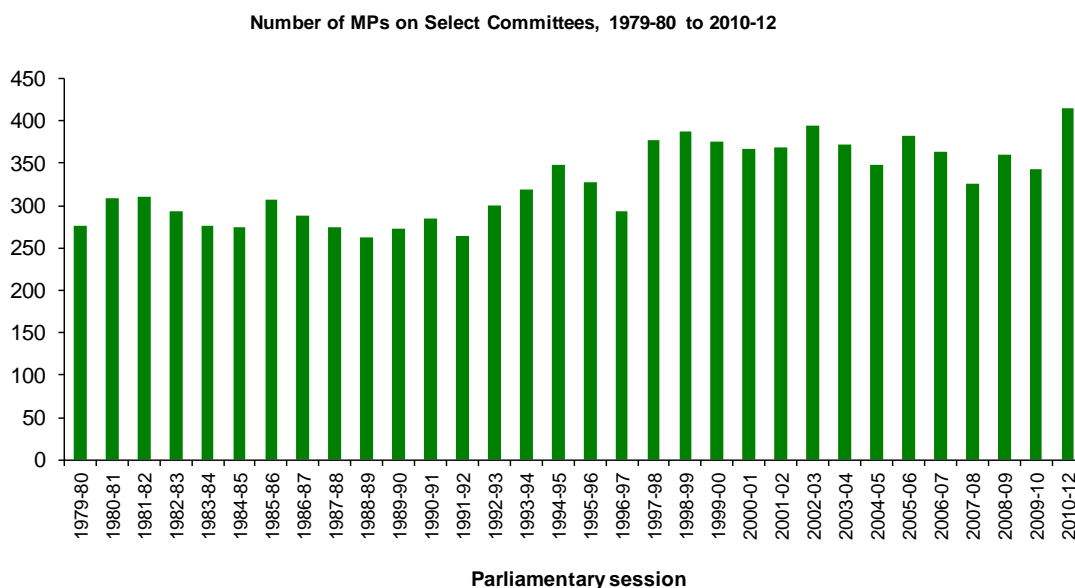
The 1997 General Election saw the biggest changeover of seats since 1945, with the number of Labour MPs increasing by 146 and the number of Conservative MPs decreasing by 178.

## 5 Select Committees in the House of Commons

### 5.1 Members on Select Committees

House of Commons departmental Select Committees were created in 1979. Since then there has been an increase in the number of committees, but the number of places on each committee has remained roughly constant.<sup>32</sup> An individual Member may sit on more than one committee.

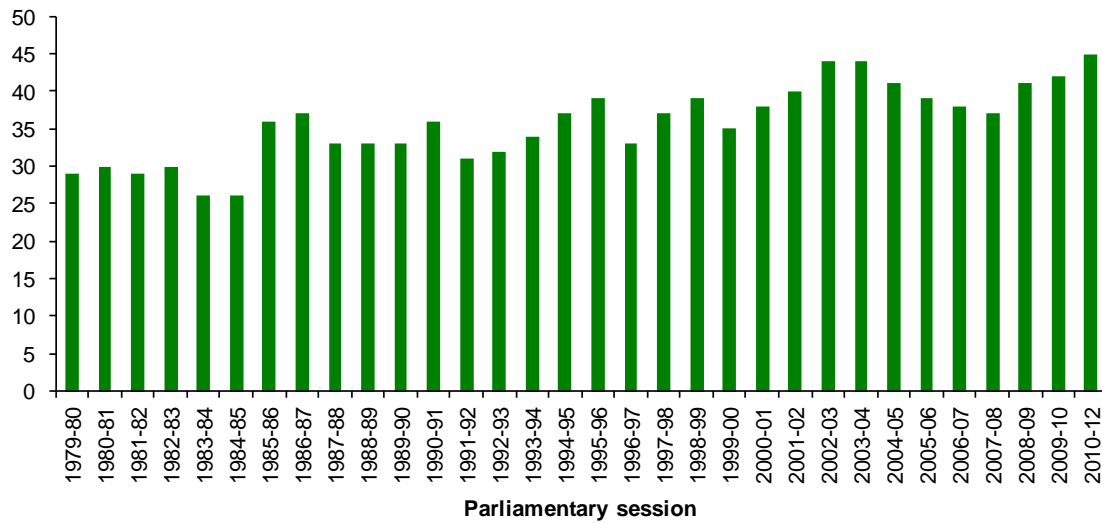
The departmental committees are designed to mirror government departments and are re-organised following machinery of government changes. Other select committees have dealt with internal House matters, or regional areas (as opposed to those which cover the Government offices for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), or cover cross-cutting issues, such as environmental audit.



In the past the number of Select Committees has fluctuated but the overall trend has been an increasing one. The longest sustained decline occurred over the five sessions between 2003-04 and 2007-08. However, since 2008-09 there has been an increase in the number of Select Committees.

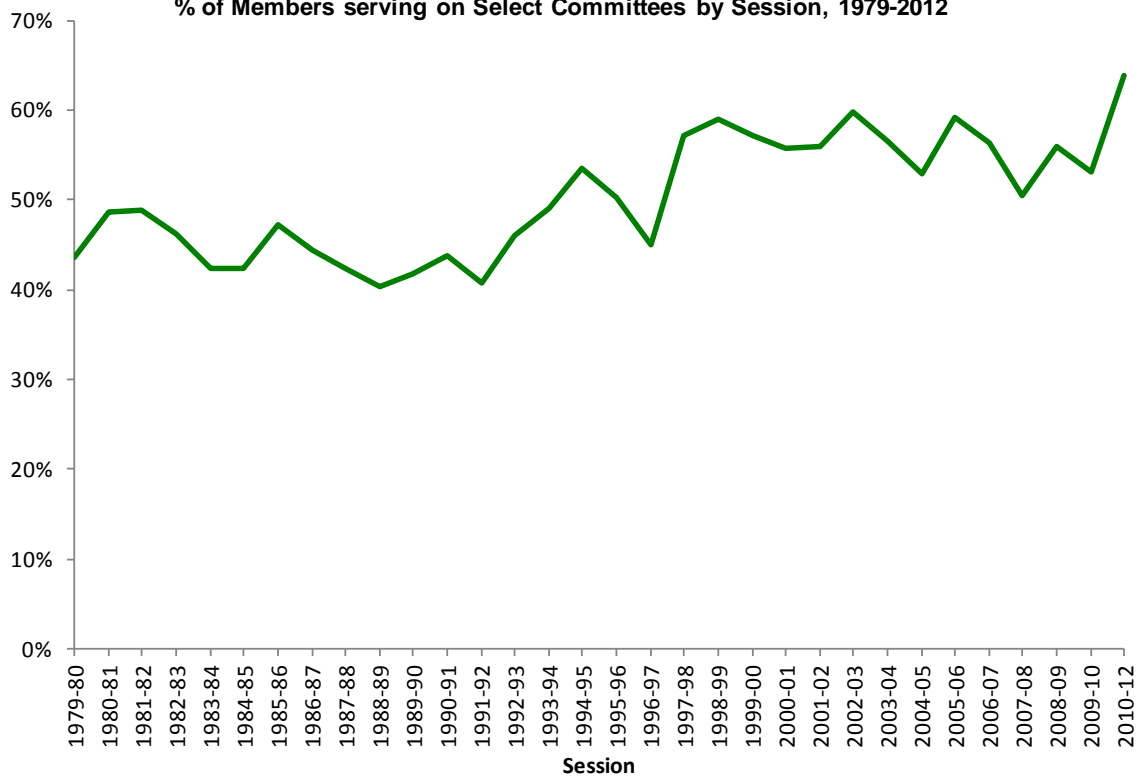
<sup>32</sup> For further information see research paper 09/55, 'The Departmental Select Committee System'

Number of Select Committees, 1979-80 to 2010-12



The percentage of Members serving on select committees has been on a slight upward trend since the 1979-80 session. However it should be noted that the trend will be affected by the number of select committees, some of which may have only been established for set periods of time, for example the Regional Select Committees were introduced in the 2008-09 and 2009-10 sessions. They were not reintroduced in the 2010-12 session.

% of Members serving on Select Committees by Session, 1979-2012





The data underpinning these charts is in the following table.

**Table 30: Select Committee statistics by session, 1979-80 to 2010-12**

<b>Session</b>	<b>Members serving on select committees</b>	<b>Number of select committees</b>	<b>% of MPs serving on select committees</b>
1979-80	277	29	43.6%
1980-81	309	30	48.7%
1981-82	310	29	48.8%
1982-83	294	30	46.3%
1983-84	276	26	42.5%
1984-85	275	26	42.3%
1985-86	307	36	47.2%
1986-87	289	37	44.5%
1987-88	275	33	42.3%
1988-89	262	33	40.3%
1989-90	272	33	41.8%
1990-91	284	36	43.7%
1991-92	265	31	40.8%
1992-93	300	32	46.1%
1993-94	319	34	49.0%
1994-95	348	37	53.5%
1995-96	327	39	50.2%
1996-97	293	33	45.0%
1997-98	377	37	57.2%
1998-99	388	39	58.9%
1999-00	376	35	57.1%
2000-01	367	38	55.7%
2001-02	368	40	55.8%
2002-03	394	44	59.8%
2003-04	373	44	56.6%
2004-05	348	41	52.8%
2005-06	382	39	59.1%
2006-07	364	38	56.3%
2007-08	326	37	50.5%
2008-09	361	48	55.9%
2009-10	343	50	53.1%
2010-12	415	45	63.8%

**Note**

Excludes the Chairmen's Panel, the Court of Referees and the Select Committee on Standing Orders

**Source**

House of Commons Sessional Returns

## 6 Staff Working in Parliament

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

The FTE average number of House of Commons and Parliamentary Information and Communications Technology (PICT) staff over the year (including temps and casuals) has increased every year since 2000/01 except for the years 2004/05 and 2005/06 where numbers remained essentially static. Staff numbers calculated on this basis have increased by 45% overall since 2000/01. The 2011/12 House of Commons Commission Annual Report also included the number of FTE equivalent House and PICT staff at year end, since 2009/10. Staff numbers calculated on this basis have decreased by 7% in the last three years.

The number of Members' staff increased by 58% between 2000/01 and 2009/10. IPSA assumed responsibility for Members' staff pay on 6 May 2010. Figures for Members' staff from 2010 are the average monthly payroll run for Members and their staff minus the 650 Members of Parliament. Therefore figures above the line are not directly comparable with the figures below the line. As a result it is not possible to say whether the fall from 2,915 in 2009/10 to 2,500 in 2010/11 represents an actual reduction.

Some staff who work for Members of Parliament also work for Members of the House of Lords.

**Table 31: Number of people working in the House of Commons, 2000/01-2010/12**

Financial Year	Members' Staff	Parliamentary Staff	
	House of Commons <sup>1</sup>	House of Commons and PICT <sup>2</sup>	<sup>3</sup>
2000/01	1,850	1,377	-
2001/02	2,179	1,430	-
2002/03	2,280	1,477	-
2003/04	2,446	1,517	-
2004/05	2,584	1,554	-
2005/06	2,577	1,553	-
2006/07	2,493	1,606	-
2007/08	2,694	1,696	-
2008/09	2,875	1,741	-
2009/10	2,915	1,839	1,884
2010/11	2,500	1,868	1,832
2011/12	2,750	2,003	1,750

### sources

House of Commons Commission Annual Reports

IPSA, Annual Report and Accounts; 2010-11, 2011-12

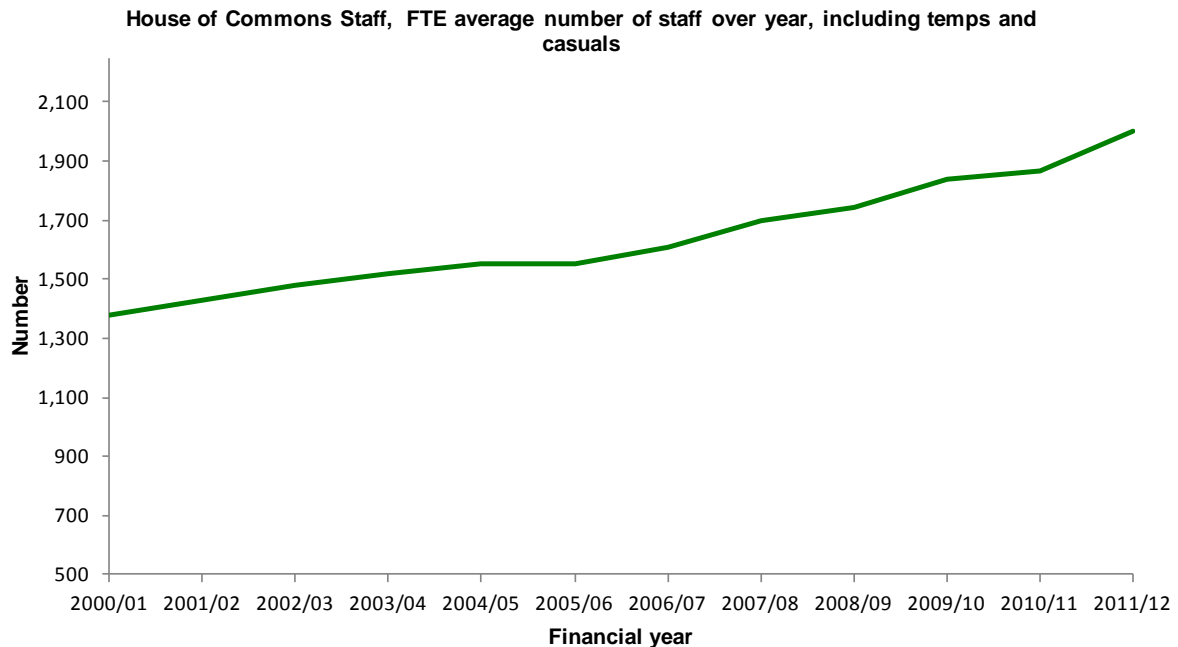
### notes

IPSA assumed responsibility for Members' staff pay on 6 May 2010. Figures for Members' staff from 2010 are the average monthly payroll run for Members' and their Staff minus 650 Members of Parliament. Therefore figures above the line are not directly comparable with the figures below the line

1. Number of Members' staff on payroll at end of financial year

2 FTE average number of staff over year, including temps and casuals

3 Number of FTE equivalent House and PICT staff at year end



## 7 Cost of the House of Commons

### 7.1 Members' Pay

The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) was established by the *Parliamentary Standards Act 2009*, to move the Parliamentary pay and allowances system in the House of Commons from a system of self-regulation to a system of regulation by an independent body. The decision to establish IPSA was taken by leaders of all parties at a meeting convened by the Speaker of the House of Commons, held on 19 May 2009, at the height of the expenses crisis.

In its review of Members' allowances the Committee on Standards in Public Life recommended that IPSA should also have responsibility for determining Members' pay. Provisions to give this effect were passed in 2010 and the *Parliamentary Standards Act 2009* was amended. IPSA took on this responsibility in May 2011. In February 2012, it announced that the pay freeze agreed by Members in March 2011 would continue for a further year and that it would review how Members should be remunerated. Its review was launched in May 2012.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Further details about the establishment of IPSA can be found in House of Commons Library standard notes [The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority: operating the Members' Expenses Scheme](#), SN05783, and [The establishment of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority](#), SN05167. Further statistics can be found in [Members' pay and expenses – current rates and a review of developments since 2009](#), RP12/29

## 7.2 Salaries of Members of Parliament, current prices

**Table 32: Salaries of Members of Parliament, current prices, 1 April 1997 – 1 April 2013**

Date	Salary
01 April 1997	£43,860
01 April 1998	£45,066
01 April 1999	£47,008
01 April 2000	£48,371
01 April 2001	£49,822
20 June 2001	£51,822
01 April 2002	£55,118
01 April 2003	£56,358
01 April 2004	£57,485
01 April 2005	£59,095
01 April 2006	£59,686
01 November 2006	£60,277
01 April 2007	£61,181
01 November 2007	£61,820
1 Apr 2008	£63,291
1 Apr 2009	£64,766
1 April 2010	£65,738
1 April 2011	£65,738
1 April 2012	£65,738
1 April 2013	£66,396

**Notes/Source:**

For full details please see , House of Commons Library Research Paper, RP12/29

<http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/RP12-29>

## 7.3 Ministerial salaries

Ministers who are currently in the House of Commons also receive the salary of an 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. An SSRB report recommended that Ministers should receive a full parliamentary salary,<sup>34</sup> and the House accepted this recommendation.<sup>35</sup>

In May 2010, the Government announced that it would "impose a subsequent Ministerial pay freeze for the lifetime of the Parliament".<sup>36</sup> It was implemented immediately by waiver and then given statutory effect by the *Ministerial and other Salaries Act 1975 (Amendment) Order 2011*, from 14 July 2011. On 20 May 2013, the *Times* reported that "last month ministers reduced their government pay to ensure that they did not benefit from a 1 per cent salary increase handed to MPs".<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Review of Parliamentary Pay and Allowances, Cm 3330, July 1996

<sup>35</sup> HC Deb 10 July 1996 c488

<sup>36</sup> 10 Downing Street press release, *A new politics: cutting Ministerial pay*, Thursday 13 May 2010

<sup>37</sup> Michael Savage, "MPS set for £10,000 rise as backbenchers urge £100,000 salaries", *Times*, 20 May 2013

**Table 32: Ministers and office-holders in the House of Commons: full salary entitlements, current prices, £**

	1997/98	2001/02	2005/06	01-Apr-06	01-Nov-06	01-Apr-07	01-Nov-07	2008/09	2009/10	01-Apr-11	14-Jul-11
Prime Minister (a)	143,860	163,418	183,932	185,771	187,611	190,425	192,414	194,250	197,689	198,661	142,500
Cabinet Minister (a)	103,860	117,979	133,997	135,337	136,677	138,727	140,176	141,866	144,520	145,492	134,565
Minister of State	74,985	85,178	97,949	98,929	99,908	101,406	102,466	104,050	106,136	107,108	98,740
Parliamentary Under Secretary	67,483	76,657	88,586	89,472	90,358	91,713	92,671	94,228	96,167	97,139	89,435
Government Chief Whip (b)	80,473	117,979	133,997	135,337	136,677	138,727	140,176	141,866	144,520	145,492	134,565
Government Deputy Chief Whip	74,985	85,178	97,949	98,929	99,908	101,406	102,466	104,050	106,136	107,108	98,740
Government Whip	63,889	72,575	84,100	84,941	85,782	87,069	87,978	89,522	91,390	92,362	84,977
Assistant Government Whip	63,889	72,575	84,100	84,941	85,782	87,069	87,978	89,522	91,390	92,362	84,977
Leader of the Opposition	98,860	112,301	127,757	129,721	130,312	132,267	133,648	135,320	138,383	139,355	128,836
Opposition Chief Whip	74,985	85,178	97,949	99,317	99,908	101,406	102,466	104,050	106,136	107,108	98,740
Deputy Chief Opposition Whip	63,889	72,575	84,100	85,191	85,782	87,069	87,978	89,522	91,390	92,362	84,977
Assistant Opposition Whip	63,889	72,575	84,100	85,191	85,782	87,069	87,978	89,522	91,390	92,362	84,977
Speaker	103,860	117,979	133,997	135,337	136,677	138,727	140,176	141,866	144,520	145,492	141,504
Chairman of Ways and Means	74,985	85,178	97,949	98,929	99,908	101,406	102,466	104,050	106,136	107,108	107,108
First Deputy Chairman	71,215	80,895	93,243	94,175	95,108	96,534	97,543	99,114	101,126	102,098	102,098
Second Deputy Chairman	71,215	80,895	93,243	94,175	95,108	96,534	97,543	99,114	101,126	102,098	102,098
Attorney General (c)	107,616						In Lords				161,510
Solicitor General (d)		109,208	124,358	125,602	126,846	128,749	130,093	131,755	134,257	135,229	124,986
Advocate General for Scotland (e)		109,208	124,358				In Lords				

- (a) On 8 May 1997 the new Government stated that the Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers would not take the post-election increases. The post-holders drew a reduced ministerial salary.

Following the election in May 2001 the Government announced that ministers would take their full salary entitlement.

- (b) Government Chief Whip in Cabinet as from 28 July 1998 to 3 October 2008, so received Cabinet Minister's salary. Since 3 October 2008, salary has continued to be paid at the same level as a Cabinet minister's salary, in accordance with Schedule 1, Part II of the *Ministerial and other Salaries Act 1975*.
- (c) Office in Lords from 29 July 1999 [*Attorney General's Salary Order 2000*, SI 2000/1827] - implementing 1996 SSRB recommendation that the salary should have same differential over the rate for a Cabinet Minister in Lords as it had in the Commons. From April to July 1999, the Commons ministerial salary was £68,332.

From the formation of the Coalition Government in May 2010, the office has been held in the Commons. Since then, the Attorney General has taken a Cabinet Minister's salary.

- (d) Office in Commons in 1992-1997 Parliament, and as from 28 July 1998.
- (e) The Office of Advocate General for Scotland was created by the *Scotland Act 1998*: the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor General for Scotland became Ministers in the Scottish Executive.

## 7.4 House of Commons staff costs

The *House of Commons Administration Resource Accounts* provide an estimate of the general costs associated with the House of Commons service (for example stationery, printing, broadcasting and security).<sup>38</sup> 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 Association of Former Members of Parliament.

Below is a table showing the staffing costs of the House of Commons. It shows the costs of staff employed by the House.

**Table 33: House of Commons staff costs by financial year, 1997/98 - 2011/12**

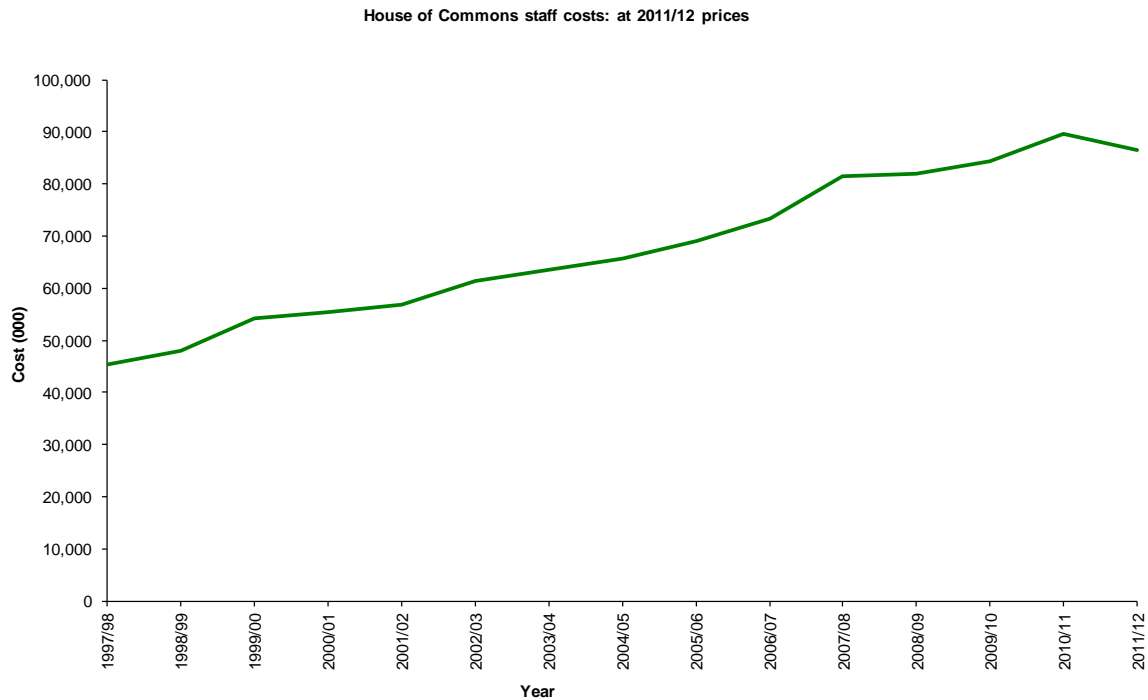
House of Commons		
Financial year	£ million (current prices)	real terms % change
1997/98	£33.6	+15.5%
1998/99	£36.3	+5.7%
1999/00	£41.8	+13.1%
2000/01	£42.8	+1.9%
2001/02	£44.8	+2.9%
2002/03	£49.5	+7.8%
2003/04	£52.4	+3.5%
2004/05	£55.8	+3.4%
2005/06	£60.1	+5.4%
2006/07	£65.4	+6.0%
2007/08	£74.5	+11.0%
2008/09	£77.0	+0.7%
2009/10	£80.5	+3.0%
2010/11	£87.8	+6.3%
2011/12	£86.5	-3.5%

### Sources

House of Commons Commission Annual Reports (to 1999/00)

House of Commons Resource Accounts

<sup>38</sup> Commons Publications, *House of Commons Resource Accounts*



## 7.5 Expenditure

Since 2001/02 the House of Commons has published its accounts 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*.

Table 34 shows House of Commons Members' expenditure in total and Table 35 shows this per Member. Table 34 also shows the House of Commons Administration expenditure. This covers spending on those employed directly by the House and the services they provide and was £211 million in 2011/12. The Members' expenditure figures provide 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 included Members' salaries, pension payments, reimbursement of expenses, insurance payments and the provision of IT training and equipment for Members and their staff. It also took into account financial assistance given to opposition parties to perform their duties, as well as providing the Exchequer's contribution to the Members' fund.

With the establishment of IPSA, MPs' expenditure by the House of Commons has significantly reduced. IPSA is now responsible for the administration of Members' salaries, expenses claims, travel and certain other costs. The House of Commons Members Estimate is now restricted...

...to providing the Exchequer contribution towards the cost of pensions for Members of Parliament, to provide provision for accrued pension liabilities arising from the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund (PCPF), payroll costs of Members appointed to specific parliamentary duties, the provision of ICT equipment to Members, financial assistance to Opposition parties to support them in the discharge of their parliamentary or representative functions (Short Money), an Exchequer contribution to the Members' Fund, provision of training for Members and their staff, payment for insurance,

Members pay and allowances relating to earlier financial years, and other general costs and non-cash items.<sup>39</sup>

The creation of IPSA in 2010 is apparent in the data; the House of Commons' MPs' expenditure drops with IPSA now responsible for most of these costs. Full details of IPSA's expenditure on Members' salaries and expenses are available in their annual reports and accounts.<sup>40</sup>

**Table 34: House of Commons expenditure by financial year, 1990/91 to 2010/12**

	current prices, £000	
	House of Commons Administration Expenditure	House of Commons Members' Expenditure
1990/91	70,543	52,395
1991/92	82,404	57,645
1992/93	84,670	67,038
1993/94	94,162	68,502
1994/95	98,091	69,467
1995/96	112,239	72,125
1996/97	130,149	81,728
1997/98	145,228	95,819
1998/99	173,550	86,175
1999/00	164,583	91,799
2000/01	214,409	94,322
2001/02	165,426	120,159
2002/03	180,006	128,523
2003/04	178,217	133,902
2004/05	189,881	141,501
2005/06	320,559 <sup>1</sup>	156,598
2006/07	210,608	155,990
2007/08	227,885	159,310
2008/09	234,596	168,955
2009/10	278,927	166,940
2010/11 <sup>3</sup>	169,726 <sup>2</sup>	1,750 <sup>2</sup>
2011/12	210,544	29,465

#### Notes

1. 2005/06 figure includes a one-off of the adoption of the FRS17 accounting standard.
2. Indexation of public service pensions moved from RPI to CPI from April 2011. The impact of this was a credit to net operating cost for both Houses of Parliament
3. Establishment of IPSA, Full details of IPSA's expenditure on Members' salaries and expenses are available in their annual reports and accounts;  
<http://parliamentarystandards.org.uk/transparency/Pages/Corporate-reports-and-publications.aspx>

#### Sources

House of Commons Commission Annual Reports (to 1999/00)  
House of Commons Resource Accounts

<sup>39</sup> House of Commons Members Annual Accounts & Audit Committee Annual Report, 2011-12, p6

<sup>40</sup> IPSA, *Corporate Reports & Publications*



**Table 35: House of Commons, Members' Expenditure, by financial year 1990/91 to 2010/12**

			<b>£000</b>	
	<b>House of Commons Members' Expenditure</b>	<b>Value in 2011/12 prices</b>	<b>Expenditure per Member</b>	<b>Expenditure per Member in 2011/12 prices</b>
1990/91	52,395	86,241	81	133
1991/92	57,645	89,082	89	138
1992/93	67,038	101,395	103	156
1993/94	68,502	101,420	105	155
1994/95	69,467	101,385	107	156
1995/96	72,125	102,455	111	158
1996/97	81,728	112,643	126	174
1997/98	95,819	129,462	145	196
1998/99	86,175	114,070	131	173
1999/00	91,799	119,382	139	181
2000/01	94,322	122,000	143	185
2001/02	120,159	152,511	182	231
2002/03	128,523	159,148	195	241
2003/04	133,902	162,229	203	246
2004/05	141,501	166,519	215	253
2005/06	156,598	180,165	242	278
2006/07	155,990	174,771	241	270
2007/08	159,310	174,151	247	270
2008/09	168,955	179,787	262	278
2009/10	166,940	175,010	258	271
2010/11 <sup>1</sup>	1,750	1,786	3	3
2011/12	29,465	29,465	45	45

**Notes:**

1. Indexation of public service pensions moved from RPI to CPI from April 2011. The impact of this was a credit to net operating cost for both Houses.

**Sources**

House of Commons Resource Accounts, House of Commons Annual Reports  
HM Treasury GDP deflators

## Appendix I – Members’ expenses prior to IPSA

This appendix sets out the arrangement for expenses for Members of the House of Commons prior to IPSA.

The **Communications Allowance** was introduced by the House on 28 March 2007, and was designed to assist Members with expenditure incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily in communicating with the public on parliamentary business. For the 2007/08 financial year, the maximum level was set at £10,000. For the 2008/09 and 2009/10 financial year it was set at £10,400 per annum.<sup>41</sup>

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 was replaced for 2009/10 by the **Personal Additional Accommodation Expenditure** (PAAE) allowance, with a threshold of £24,222 for that year.<sup>42</sup>

**Table 36: Additional Costs Allowance- maximum rate January 1972 to April 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

<sup>41</sup> Research Paper 09/60, *Members’ Allowances*, page 5

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*

For more information, see the standard note *Additional Costs Allowance*.<sup>43</sup>

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 37: Maximum Office Costs Allowance, October 1969 to April 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

**Notes:**

(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.

<sup>43</sup> SN/PC/04641, [Additional Costs Allowance](#)

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 funded the salaries of Members' staff, together with pension contributions. The allowance was updated in accordance with movements in the Average Earnings Index. From 1 April 2009, it became known as the **Staffing Expenditure**.

Below is a table outlining changes in the Staffing Allowance:

**Table 38: Staffing Allowance, June 2001 – April 2009**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
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

A **Temporary Secretarial Allowance (TSA)** was made available to meet the extra cost of obtaining temporary secretarial/research assistance, while a salaried Member's staff was absent from work through paid sickness, maternity or adoption leave. The amount available was 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.

The **Winding Up Allowance** was 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 was 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** was payable to any Member who ceased to be an MP at a General Election, in order to assist with the cost of adjusting to non-parliamentary life. The amount was based on age and length of service, and varied 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** was available to any Member whose constituency is within inner London. It was paid in addition to the salary. The 2008/09 rate was £2,916. From 1 April 2009 the London Supplement was 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** provided relevant training for Members and their staff and appropriate insurance. It also provided exceptional expenses for Members who represent constituencies with particular problems, and reasonable adjustments to working conditions and equipment for Members with particular needs.

The **Incidental Expenses Allowance** came about after the change to the Office Costs Allowance in 2001. It was available “to meet any other expenditure which Members may incur wholly necessarily and exclusively in discharging their duties as Members”<sup>44</sup> 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 could be claimed in AOE costs.

The **Motor Mileage Allowance** (MMA) reimbursed Members of the Commons for the cost of travel by car between Westminster and their constituency, homes and other approved journeys on parliamentary business. The Motorcycle Allowance was introduced on 29 January 2004. It reimbursed Members for journeys by motorcycle. The Bicycle Allowance was introduced in 1998 and reimbursed Members for journeys by bicycle. Originally it was updated annually by the percentage increase in the RPI. From 2004 the rate was set by the Inland Revenue, and from 2005 by HMRC.

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<sup>44</sup> HC Deb c421, 5 July 2001

## **Appendix II – selected sources of statistics on the House of Lords**

### *Delegated Legislation*

Information on delegated legislation from the perspective of the House of Lords is available in the following Lords Library Note which provides an overview of delegated legislation in the House of Lords since 2000. It includes appendices giving statistics on divisions on delegated legislation:

[Delegated Legislation in the House of Lords since 2000, LLN 2012-012](#)

### *Party and Group Strengths and Voting in the House of Lords*

The House of Lords Library have produced a briefing on Party and Group Strengths and Voting in the House of Lords which provides good additional context for sections 5.1 and 5.2 below.

[House of Lords: Party and Group Strengths and Voting, LLN 2012/026](#)

### *Women in the House of Lords*

An in depth look at women in the House of Lords is available in the following Lords Library Note:

[Women in the House of Lords, LLN 2012-005](#)

### *Peerage Creations*

For details on peerage creations, see the Lords Library's publications

[Peerage Creations, 1958-2008, LLN 2008/019](#) & [Peerage Creations since 1997, LLN 2012/023](#)

### *Select Committees in the House of Lords*

Information on Select Committees in the House of Lords can be found in the following briefing written by the House of Lords Library:

[Select Committees in the House of Lords, LLN 2012/031](#)

### *Expenses in the House of Lords*

Details about House of Lords expenses in the past, including a timeline of developments, can be found in the following Lords Library Note:

[Financial Support for Members of the House of Lords, LLN 2011/039](#)

The House of Lords administration also publish a document similar to the House of Commons Sessional Returns entitled House of Lords Sessional Statistics. These are available on Parliament's website back to the 2007-08 session:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld/ldstat.htm>

Further statistical information on the House of Lords, including annual accounts, are available here:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/house-of-lords-publications/>