



## BRIEFING PAPER

Number CBP04400, 16 July 2020

# Commons select committee chairs in the 2019 Parliament

Compiled by  
Aleksandra Gorb &  
Sarah Priddy

### Remit and powers of select committees

Select committees are cross-party groups of MPs or Lords established by either House for the duration of a Parliament. The work of the Commons committees is governed by [Standing Orders \(SOs\) of the House of Commons](#); these rules set out their membership, remit and powers and any changes to the rules must be approved by the House.

Committees decide upon their own subjects for inquiry within the broad scope of their remit. They seek evidence from people and organisations with an interest in their inquiries and anyone can [submit evidence to the inquiry](#). The Commons Library briefing, [Select Committees: evidence and witnesses](#), reviews the power of select committees “to send for persons, papers and records”.

### Departmental select committees

In the House of Commons there are 20 departmental select committees that shadow the work of the Government departments. Their remit is set [SO No.152](#):

Select committees shall be appointed to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the principal government departments as set out in paragraph (2) of this order and associated public bodies. Other Commons select committees cover aspects of public policy such as public spending, and the internal administration of the House.

### Membership of committees and election of chairs

Membership of select committees reflects party membership of the House as a whole. Since June 2010, chairs of departmental select committees have been elected by secret ballot of the House. Also elected by secret ballot are the chairs of the following select committees [\[SO No.122B\]](#):

- Environmental Audit
- Petitions
- Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs
- Public Accounts
- Procedure
- Standards

## 2 Commons select committee chairs in the 2019 Parliament

In addition, the Chair of the Backbench Business Committee is elected at the start of each Session in accordance with [SO No.122D](#).

The number of MPs on the committee is determined by Standing Orders and is noted in the table below along with the party affiliation of the chair and a link to each committee's website which gives the full membership of the committee and the role of the committee.

### Further information – Commons Library briefings

The practical arrangements for the election of committee chairs by secret ballot are set out in, [Select committees: election of chairs and members](#).

Background on the changes to the way in which members of select committees are nominated is provided by [Nominations to Select Committees](#).

Certain committee chairs are entitled to an additional salary; Since April 2017 this has been £15,235. The briefing on [Select Committees – pay for chairs](#) reviews the background to proposals for paying select committee chairs.

Commons Library Insight: [Select Committees: Membership by gender](#), 24 Sep 2017

Commons Library Briefing: [Evolution and changing composition of departmental select committees](#), 24 Jun 2019

**Table 1. Commons select committee chairs in the 2019 Parliament**

**Departmental committees**

Select committee	No. <sup>1</sup>	Chair	Party	Date elected	Notes
Chair elected by secret ballot of the House					
<a href="#">Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy</a>	11	Darren Jones	Lab	06/05/2020	Rachel Reeves until 06/05/2020
<a href="#">Housing, Communities and Local Government</a>	11	Clive Betts	Lab	27/01/2020	
<a href="#">Digital, Culture Media and Sport</a>	11	Julian Knight	Con	29/01/2020	
<a href="#">Defence</a>	11	Tobias Ellwood	Con	29/01/2020	
<a href="#">Education</a>	11	Robert Halfon	Con	27/01/2020	
<a href="#">Environment, Food and Rural Affairs</a>	11	Neil Parish	Con	27/01/2020	
<a href="#">Future Relationship with the European Union (Prev. Exiting the European Union Committee)</a>	20	Hilary Benn	Lab	27/01/2020	<a href="#">Established 2 Mar 2020 for 12 months and added to list of committees whose chair is elected by the whole House</a>
<a href="#">Foreign Affairs</a>	11	Tom Tugendhat	Con	29/01/2020	
<a href="#">Health and Social Care</a>	11	Jeremy Hunt	Con	29/01/2020	
<a href="#">Home Affairs</a>	11	Yvette Cooper	Lab	27/01/2020	
<a href="#">International Development</a>	11	Sarah Champion	Lab	29/01/2020	
<a href="#">International Trade</a>	11	Angus Brendan MacNeil	SNP	29/01/2020	
<a href="#">Justice</a>	11	Robert Neill	Con	29/01/2020	
<a href="#">Northern Ireland Affairs</a>	11	Simon Hoare	Con	29/01/2020	
<a href="#">Science and Technology</a>	11	Greg Clark	Con	29/01/2020	
<a href="#">Scottish Affairs</a>	11	Pete Wishart	SNP	27/01/2020	<a href="#">Committee re-established on 04/05/2020</a>
<a href="#">Transport</a>	11	Huw Merriman	Con	29/01/2020	
<a href="#">Treasury</a>	11	Mel Stride	Con	27/01/2020	
<a href="#">Welsh Affairs</a>	11	Stephen Crabb	Con	27/01/2020	
<a href="#">Women and Equalities</a>	11	Caroline Nokes	Con	27/01/2020	
<a href="#">Work and Pensions</a>	11	Stephen Timms	Lab	29/01/2020	

## Other scrutiny committees

Select committee	No. <sup>1</sup>	Chair	Party	Start date	Notes
Chair elected by secret ballot of the House					
<a href="#">Environmental Audit</a>	16	Philip Dunne	Con	29/01/2020	
<a href="#">Public Accounts</a>	16	Meg Hillier	Lab/Co-	27/01/2020	
<a href="#">Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs</a>	11	William Wragg	Con	29/01/2020	
The House appoints the following committees whose Chair is generally elected by the members of the committee					
<a href="#">European Scrutiny</a>	16	Sir William Cash	Con	18/03/2020	Committee established 2 Mar 2020
<a href="#">Human Rights (Joint)</a>	6 <sup>2</sup>	Harriet Harman QC	Lab	04/03/2020	Committee established 2 Mar 2020
<a href="#">Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament</a>	8 <sup>2</sup>	Dr Julian Lewis	Con	15/07/2020	Independent following withdrawal of party whip on 15/07/2020
<a href="#">National Security Strategy (Joint)</a>	11 <sup>2</sup>	Margaret Beckett	Lab	18/05/2020	<a href="#">Role of the Committee</a>
<a href="#">Regulatory Reform</a>	15	Stephen McPartland	Con	04/03/2020	Committee established 2 Mar 2020
<a href="#">Statutory Instruments (Joint)</a>	7 <sup>2</sup>	Jessica Morden	Lab	05/02/2020	Committee established 27 Jan 2020
<a href="#">European Statutory Instruments Committee</a>	16	Andrew Jones	Con	10/02/2020	Established to sit proposed negative instruments following the passing of the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018

## Other select committees

Select committee	No. <sup>1</sup>	Chair	Party	Start date	Notes
Chair elected by secret ballot of the House					
<a href="#">Backbench Business</a>	8	Ian Mearns	Lab	27/01/2020	
<a href="#">Petitions</a>	11	Catherine McKinnell	Lab	29/01/2020	
<a href="#">Procedure</a>	15	Karen Bradley	Con	29/01/2020	
<a href="#">Standards</a>	7	Chris Bryant	Lab	06/05/2020	Cttee consists of seven MPs and seven lay members
		Kate Green	Lab	27/01/2020	Appointed Shadow Minister for Works and Pensions 10 April 2020
The House appoints the following committees whose Chair is generally elected by the members of the committee					
<a href="#">Administration</a>	11	Sir Charles Walker	Con	18/03/2020	Committee established 2 Mar 2020
<a href="#">Finance</a>	11	Lilian Greenwood	Lab	03/03/2020	Committee established 2 Mar 2020
<a href="#">Liaison</a>	37	Sir Bernard Jenkin	Con	20/05/2020	Committee established 20 May 2020
<a href="#">Privileges</a>	7	Chris Bryant	Lab	19/05/2020	Committee established 2 March 2020
<a href="#">Selection</a>	9	Bill Wiggin	Con	16/01/2020	Committee established 15 Jan 2020

## Notes

1. Number of MPs on the committee
  2. Number of Commons Members
  3. In 1997 Robert Sheldon was added to the Liaison Commttee and elected Chair; In 2001 and 2005 Alan William was added to the Liaison Committee and elected Chair
- Classification of committees based on Liaison Committee report: *The work of committees in 2007-08*, HC 291 2008-09

## Useful Links

[Winning candidates for select committee chairs announced, 29 January 2020: Parliament website](#)

[Full list of all committees](#)

[Select Committee Calendar](#)

[Select Committees: Allocation of Chairs, HC Deb 16 January 2020 cc 1266-8](#)

## Key

DH - Department of Health

Govt - Government

PM - Prime Minister

PUSS - Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State

## Key to parties

Con - Conservative

Lab - Labour

Lab/Co-op - Labour and Co-operative

Lib Dem - Liberal Democrat

## Parliament: facts and figures

[Browse all briefings in the series](#)

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