

Directorate-General for the Presidency
 Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments

Factsheet: UK House of Lords









1. At a glance

The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy with a bicameral Parliament. The upper House - the House of Lords - has currently just under 800 Members who are, in the main appointed by the Monarch on the advice of the Prime Minister, or on the advice of the House of Lords Appointments Commission. Another 92 Members are hereditary peers. Together these Members are called Lords Temporal. In addition, there are a further 26 Lords Spiritual who sit in the Lords by virtue of their ecclesiastical role in the Church of England.

The House of Lords complements the work of the House of Commons in enacting legislation. In general, bills can be introduced at either House, and the House of Lords scrutinises bills approved by the House of Commons. It may review and propose amendments to bills from the Commons and, while it cannot prevent bills from being enacted into law, except in certain limited circumstances, it can delay them and force the Commons to reconsider their decisions. The House of Lords is also responsible for holding the Government into account, and for shaping policy.



2. Composition

The membership of the House of Lords is not fixed. As at 1 September 2016, there were 799 Lords Temporal and Lords Spiritual entitled to sit and vote at the House.

	Affiliated party	Total	EP affiliation
	Conservative and Unionist Party	244	
	Labour Party	208	
	Liberal Democrats	105	
	Crossbenchers	174	
	Other parties	16	
	Non-affiliated and independent	26	
	Lords Spiritual (Bishops)	26	
	Total	799	

(The breakdown of membership of the Lords can be found here: <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/lords/composition-of-the-lords/>).

3. Officeholders

<p>Speaker of the House of Lords</p>  <p>Lord Fowler (non-affiliated), since 1 September 2016</p>	<p>Chair of the European Union Affairs Committee</p>  <p>Lord Boswell of Aynho (non-affiliated), since May 2012</p>
<p>Clerk of the House of Lords: David Beamish (since 16 April 2011)</p>	

4. Relations with Members of the European Parliament

Participation rights for UK MEPs in plenary sittings	No
Participation rights for UK MEPs in committee meetings	No
Availability of videoconferencing system in the House of Lords	Yes

5. Information links

- Official website: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/lords/>
- [Standing Orders of the House of Lords](#)
- [List of select committees](#)
- [Recent documents submitted by the House of Lords to the Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange \(IPEX\)](#)
- [European Parliament Information Office in London](#)

6. Contacts

<p>Factsheet author and contact in the EP Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments:</p> <p>Mr Luis Balsells Office WIE 05U005, 1047 Brussels Phone +32 2 28 32386 luis.balsells@ep.europa.eu</p>	<p>Brussels-based contact of the House of Lords:</p> <p>Mr Paul Dowling Office WIE 06U16, 1047 Brussels Phone +32 2 28 31496 paul.dowling@natparl.ep.europa.eu</p>
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<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/relnatparl>
relnatparl@ep.europa.eu