

Factsheet: UK House of Commons












1. At a glance

The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy with a bicameral Parliament. The lower House, called the House of Commons, consists of 650 Members elected directly by the citizens using the first-past-the-post system in every constituency that each Member is elected to represent. Following the results of the latest election, held on 8th June 2017, the Conservative party lost its majority, resulting in the formation of a minority government with an arrangement with the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) of Northern Ireland.



The functions and powers of the House of Commons (as those of the House of Lords) are governed by a number of rules, some of which are written down and are called 'Standing Orders'. Other rules are set out in resolutions of the House. However, much of what Parliament does is determined by 'custom and practice', that is unwritten convention established through continued use over time.

The House of Commons is the main legislative body of the UK Parliament. Beyond its legislative function, the House exercises democratic scrutiny over the Government through its parliamentary committees and during Prime Minister's Question Time. Should the Government fail to retain the confidence of a majority in the House of Commons, either by the House defeating the Government on a confidence motion or by defeating a policy that the Government has indicated is a 'matter of confidence', Parliament is dissolved and the Government calls a general election.

2. Composition

Results of the elections of 8 June 2017				
	Party	EP affiliation	%	Seats
	Conservative and Unionist Party		42.4	317
	Labour Party		40.0	262
	Scottish National Party		3	35
	Liberal Democrats		7.4	12
	Democratic Unionist Party	Non-attached	0,9	10
	Sinn Féin		0,7	7
	Plaid Cymru		0,5	4
	Others		5,1	7
			100%	650
Turnout: 68.8%. The next election will take place in 2022				

3. Officeholders

Speaker of the House of Commons  Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP, since 4 November 2019	Chair of European Scrutiny Committee  Sir William Cash MP, since 15 July 2015
Clerk of the House of Commons: Mr John Benger (named on 5 February 2019)	

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 Commons	Yes

5. Information links

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

6. Contacts

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