



## Factsheet P17 Procedure Series

Revised June 2010

House of Commons Information Office

# Guide to the Weekly Information Bulletin

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This Factsheet has been archived so the content and web links may be out of date. Please visit our [About Parliament](#) pages for current information.

The Weekly Information Bulletin (WIB) is produced by the House of Commons Information Office weekly when the House is sitting. The Bulletin is published by The Stationery Office (TSO) on Saturdays and it is available on the [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) website on Fridays from 4.00pm. The Bulletin covers all the main proceedings of the House of Commons as well as selected information from the House of Lords. At the end of every session the information contained in the WIB is amalgamated into the Sessional Information Digest, also published by TSO.

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## Introduction

The House of Commons Weekly Information Bulletin originated from the 9th Report from the Select Committee on House of Commons (Services), (HC 509 1976-77), the first edition appearing on 4 November 1978. The Bulletin received a major 'facelift' prior to the 1998-99 session.

This factsheet serves as a user's guide to the Weekly Information Bulletin and describes the information contained within. It also contains details of the availability of the WIB on the internet.

### First issue of each session

Issue No 1 is used as a compendium of certain material which does not change, or changes infrequently, and should be retained with the latest issue by subscribers as a ready-reference tool. It normally includes:

- Alphabetical list of Members. This can be updated by the by-elections and new MPs section of every Weekly Information Bulletin.
- Lists of HM Government and Opposition spokespeople. Changes are noted in the Noticeboard when they occur.
- House of Commons – Principal Officers
- Members of Parliament who are also Members of other parliaments and assemblies.
- Glossary of Parliamentary Terms

A complete list of select committee membership will appear in the first issue if available or in a later issue when full details are known.

## Contents

### Noticeboard

This includes the publication date of the next issue of the Bulletin, dates of recesses, private members' bills Fridays, any changes of Government ministers or opposition spokespeople, notice of by-elections and other noteworthy items.

### The Week Ahead

This section of the Bulletin is designed to give the reader a single page overview of what will happen in the Commons Chamber, Lords Chamber and Committees of both Houses in the coming week. It is in abbreviated form to allow for as many items of business as possible to be included.

Abbreviations used include:

OPQ (Oral Parliamentary Questions)  
 Leg (Legislation)  
 Deb (Debate)  
 Adj (Adjournment Debate)  
 TMRB (Ten Minute Rule Bill)

Del Leg (Delegated Legislation)  
 DLSC (Delegated Legislation Standing Committee)  
 PBC (Public Bill Committee)  
 ESC (European Standing Committee)

### **Previous Week's Business**

This section contains the previous week's business and will include business from the previous Friday if the House was sitting (but not for the Friday on which the Bulletin goes to press). The items listed for each day are followed by an indication of whether the motion was agreed to or not, together with a summary of any amendments debated or voted on. Motions taken formally and therefore without debate are not included. The following are also listed along with the main business: ministerial statements, Speaker's statements, ten minute rule bills, personal statements, programme motions, money resolutions and what time the House sat and rose.

### **Written Ministerial Statements**

Statements are included from the previous Friday (if sitting) up to Thursday of the current week. The title and name of the Minister who has made the statement is listed.

### **Forthcoming business of the House of Commons**

The Leader of the House makes a business statement every Thursday at around 11.30am (this may be later if there are any other statements). It includes the main government business for the forthcoming week and some provisional business for the week after. The following are normally listed in the forthcoming business section: oral questions, ten minute rule bills, legislation, debates, Westminster Hall debates, private members bills, adjournment debates, sitting times. All House of Commons business is subject to alteration at short notice but that announced for the second week is particularly subject to change and the details of Thursday Topical Debates are not known until the beginning of that week. Forthcoming business does not include oral statements, which are not confirmed until the day they are to take place. The business of the House can be found using Calendar on the [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) website within an hour of its announcement through the link to What's On.

### **Forthcoming business of the House of Lords**

Information contained in this section is provided by the House of Lords Journal Office. The section usually includes business for the forthcoming week and some provisional details for the week after that.

### **Complete list of public bills**

Many of our users find this the single most important feature of the Bulletin as it provides details of every bill presented to Parliament during the session. The list is alphabetical and provides details of the Member, Minister or Lord who introduced the bill, the bill title, all bill numbers, the type of bill, the relevant dates for each stage of the bill and the date of Royal Assent (if the Bill completes all of its stages). A note of the abbreviations used is provided on the page before the section. The list is up to date to the close of business in both Houses on the Thursday but excludes developments on the Friday. See **Factsheet L1** for an explanation of procedure for Government bills.

Any forthcoming dates of readings are prefixed by a 'Prov' and italicised to indicate the provisional nature of that business. The entries for forthcoming readings of private members' bills also show their position (in brackets) in the order of business for that day thus giving some indication of the likelihood of debate (usually only the first two or three Bills will receive any debate).

Please contact the House of Commons Information Office by telephone (020-7219 4272) or email ([hcinfo@parliament.uk](mailto:hcinfo@parliament.uk)) if you need further explanation of the information in the list.

### **Presentation and publication of bills and acts**

This section is intended as a quick reference guide to public bills published for the first time. The bill number, ISBN and price are listed as is Royal Assent and the printing of acts.

### **Public and General Acts for the session**

This is a cumulative list, showing the bills that have received Royal Assent since the start of the current session together with ordering details.

### **Draft bills**

This section provides details of draft bills published (including Command Paper number) during the session, which committee the bill is being considered by, the committee report into the bill and the Government response. After the Government has issued a response, the draft bill is taken out of the Bulletin as it has completed its pre-legislative stages.

### **Private bills**

This is an alphabetical list of all private bills (see **Factsheet L4**) current in the session. Where the bill has been carried over from a previous session, the original dates are listed together with the carry-over motion and when the Bill was reintroduced and any subsequent stages. The list also states whether the bill is opposed, the parliamentary agent responsible and the number of petitions outstanding. The list is up to date as of the close of business in both Houses on Thursday and includes any provisional dates for future stages in italics.

### **Regulatory reform orders**

Orders made under Section 6(1) of the *Regulatory Reform Act 2001* are included in this section. The date the draft proposal was laid is listed in the first section with the paper number for the Lords and Commons Committee report and an alphabetical key indicating the Committee recommendation. The second section provides details of the draft order, Lords and Commons Committee reports and recommendations and the dates it was considered on the floor of both Houses. For further details of parliamentary procedure relating to such orders see **Factsheet L7**.

### **Remedial orders**

This section lists proposals and draft orders made under Section 10 of the *Human Rights Act 1998*. Report and recommendation of the Joint Committee on Human Rights is shown for each stage as well as dates of Commons and Lords consideration.

### **Northern Ireland legislation**

This section lists the dates of proceedings on Northern Ireland Orders in Council laid under Sections 15 and 85 of the *Northern Ireland Act 1998* and the *Northern Ireland Act 2000*. After the title of the Order the abbreviation (N) is used to indicate if the Order is subject to the negative procedure (for further information regarding negative and affirmative procedures for Statutory Instruments see **Factsheet L7**). The abbreviation (U) is used to indicate if the Order is made by reason of urgency in which case it must be approved by both Houses within 40 days of being made. After the date given for proceedings in the Commons, two abbreviations are used; (D) refers to the date the Order was discussed in a Delegated Legislation Committee, (A) refers to the date it was approved on the floor of the House and is used for both the Lords and the Commons. Orders are sometimes considered by a NI Order Grand Committee in the House of Lords and this is indicated by the abbreviation (O). Provisional future dates, where known, are shown in italics and the date the Order was made by the Privy Council is noted as well as the statutory instrument number. **Factsheet L8** explains the process of Northern Ireland legislation in further detail

### ***Transport and Works Act 1992 Orders***

The application of the *Transport and Works Act 1992* (see **Factsheet L7**) has removed a number of matters from the remit of private bills. Applications for orders are deposited in the House of Commons Library, from which the dates of application and contact details for the agent are taken. The final printing of an order as a statutory instrument is also noted.

### **General Committees**

The first part of the section is an alphabetical list of general committees for the current session. This list includes: the name of the bill, the status of the committee (i.e. the date the committee will/has reported on) and which issues of the Bulletin include membership and amendments to membership.

The second part details membership, and includes lists of Members nominated to serve on Public Bill Committees, changes in previously nominated committees and Chairmen appointed. The Members are nominated by the Selection Committee and membership appears in the Vote Bundle issued on Thursday morning, from which the Bulletin list is taken. Any changes in membership that week are included with the main membership, subsequent changes noted separately. Lists of the names of Members selected to serve on statutory instruments and European Community documents committees are excluded, but can be supplied by the Information Office by telephone or e-mail, as well as being available in Votes and Proceedings on the website.

The final part lists in detail the work of the committees in the past week, i.e. those clauses reached or under consideration at the end of the sitting, and forthcoming meetings with times and room numbers where applicable. Times and room numbers are correct when the Bulletin goes to press however, details may change at short notice and should be checked with the Committee Office by telephone (020 7219 3267). Further information on general committees is available in **Factsheet L1**.

### **Select committees**

Changes in membership of Select Committees (see **Factsheet P2**) are noted in the Bulletin when they are approved by the House on a motion and are listed at the beginning of this section. Select committee meetings held in public during the previous week are listed together with the witnesses who appeared. Private meetings are not listed. There is generally a delay of 3 to 6 weeks in publication of the evidence given to departmental Committees. The Information Office is able to advise the paper number for a particular evidence session but cannot advise a date of printing.

Select committee meetings for the forthcoming week are listed, with the name of the subject to be discussed and information on time, location and witnesses attending to give evidence. This information is supplied on Thursdays by the Committee Office. A committee however may decide to meet at very short notice, in private or occasionally, meetings may have to be cancelled, this may affect the accuracy of the list. People intending to travel some distance may wish to confirm details with the Committee Office (020 7219 2033) or check the Order of Business on the Parliament website. All public select committee meetings are broadcast on the parliament website and an asterisk is used to denote if proceedings will be broadcast by BBC Parliament.

**Forthcoming House of Lords select committee meetings**

This section is compiled by the House of Lords Journal Office and lists forthcoming public Lords select committee meetings.

The time and venue of the meeting is listed. Details are correct at the time of going to press. Further information can be obtained from the Lords Committee Office by telephone (020 7219 2940).

**Select committee publications**

Every effort is made to obtain all publications of select committees promptly for inclusion in the Bulletin. The documents are divided into the following sections: evidence, reports and government responses. In each case, the full bibliographic details are given so the document may be requested from any ordering system.

Publication of National Audit Office reports is noted as these reports often lead to Public Accounts Committee inquiries and are published as House of Commons Papers.

**Select committee current inquiries**

This section comprises of a list of departmental select committee current inquiries. Details listed include the name and stage of the inquiry, the date of the first evidence session and the House of Commons Paper number under which the evidence has been published (e.g. HC 252-i-ii-iii etc). The entry remains listed until publication of the committee report.

Forthcoming inquiries calling for public evidence are also listed. This information is taken from select committee press notices and includes the date the inquiry was announced and the date written evidence should be sent in by.

**White and Green papers**

White papers are statements of government policy and are almost always command papers. Green papers are consultation documents and are occasionally published as command papers but usually they are published by and are available from the appropriate government department or agency. The Bulletin includes details of where to obtain further copies and for Green Papers the dates by which any comments must be received.

**Regulatory Impact Assessments**

Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIAs) are required to be published alongside all primary and secondary legislation. In the case of government bills, an RIA forms part of the explanatory notes to the bill; in other cases, a separate document is issued. The Bulletin lists the relevant contact for each RIA.

**Other papers**

Noteworthy parliamentary or government papers which do not fall into one of the previous categories are listed in this section together with any ordering details which may be available.

**European Communities Documents**

This section shows all European documents selected for debate by the European Scrutiny Committee. Documents are either debated on the floor of the House or in European Standing Committee. A provisional date for when the document will be considered is given in italics if it is available. The Bulletin lists the Council number of each document, however the COM or SEC number is normally required to order the document. Further information is available from the

London Office of the European Commission by telephone (020 7973 1992), website: <http://www.cec.org.uk/>.

### **Early Day Motions**

This section comprises of a list of the Early Day Motions laid from the previous Friday (if sitting) up to and including the Thursday of the week of publication. The list includes the date the EDM was laid, the number of the EDM, the primary sponsor and the title. Further details, including the full text of the motion and numbers of signatories is available on the parliamentary website, the 'Notices of Motions' in the Vote Bundle or by contacting the House of Commons Information Office on 020 7219 4272. For information about early day motions see **Factsheet P3**.

### **State of the parties in the House of Commons**

This section of the Bulletin is a summary of party strengths. Members who are listed individually have been contacted to ask how they wish to be designated. The Government majority is calculated from these figures. The number of women MPs is shown as it is a figure often requested.

### **By-elections and new MPs**

This section is an accumulation of all the by-elections of the Parliament. The dates of introduction and of maiden speeches of new Members are given. After a General Election, maiden speeches of all new Members are listed.

### **Political Party Contacts**

This is a static section listing the contacts for political parties with representatives in the House of Commons.

### **Address book**

Another static section of the Bulletin providing contact details for various offices within Parliament. Also listed, for convenience are the contact details of the devolved parliaments and assemblies.

### **Selective index**

This is a guide to updates of "static" matters which appear, usually in Issue No. 1, and to other occasional items such as the budget, changes of ministerial and opposition spokesmen and the order of oral questions.

## **Publication**

Since the beginning of the 2010/11 session, the Weekly Information Bulletin is an online only publication. It is available to view on the parliament website, <http://www.parliament.uk>. It is online by 4.00pm on Fridays.

On rare occasions the House may sit for one or two days only at the beginning of a week. The Bulletin would not normally be published the following Friday, but the information for those days would be included in the Bulletin published at the end of the next sitting week. The next publication date is given in each Bulletin.

## Suggestions

The Editor of the Bulletin is open to suggestions for improvements and additions to the content of the journal. The editor can only assist with editorial matters.

Contact details are:

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## Factsheet P17 Weekly Information Bulletin

It would help greatly to ensure that Factsheets fulfil their purpose if users would fill in and return this brief pre-addressed questionnaire, or email a response. Negative responses can be as useful as positive.

### For your purposes, did you find this Factsheet

- |                |                          |                  |                          |                |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Very useful | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fairly useful    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Not much use   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Too long    | <input type="checkbox"/> | The right length | <input type="checkbox"/> | Too short      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Clear       | <input type="checkbox"/> | Not always clear | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rather unclear | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Any comments?

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