



HOUSE OF COMMONS



A CAREER @
HANSARD

It is two minutes before the start of an important debate and the noise levels are beginning to rise as MPs squeeze their way on to the green leather benches. The atmosphere is thick with excitement and expectation. There is a wall of noise as the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition take their places.



The Speaker calls “Order!”

Above in the Press Gallery, journalists are crushed together, discussing the latest story.

At the front, the *Hansard* reporters are craning their necks, looking this way and that, making sure that they recognise every single Member and that no point is missed. They focus intently, knowing that this could be the moment that is talked about for years to come.



OUR JOB

People have been recording the proceedings of Parliament for centuries. They were there to report the announcement of Wellington's victory at Waterloo, the disaster of the charge of the light brigade and the end of the slave trade.

Hansard reporters continue that tradition today. Working in the cockpit of democracy, we faithfully report each Member's words, ever present as political events unfold.

We were there for the passing of landmark legislation such as the Same Sex Marriage Act, the Race Relations Acts and the Equal Pay Act. We were there as MPs debated the Iraq war, Syria, the EU

referendum and the Chilcot report, and as MPs paid tribute to Jo Cox.

We record everything that is said not only in the Chamber of the House of Commons, but in Westminster Hall and in other forums such as Select Committees where the public and expert witnesses give evidence on subjects ranging from UK relations with Russia to the meningitis B vaccine.

We work to tight deadlines, translating the spoken word into the written, always sensitive to the nuances of the argument, preserving the flavour of MPs' speeches and capturing the drama of the occasion.

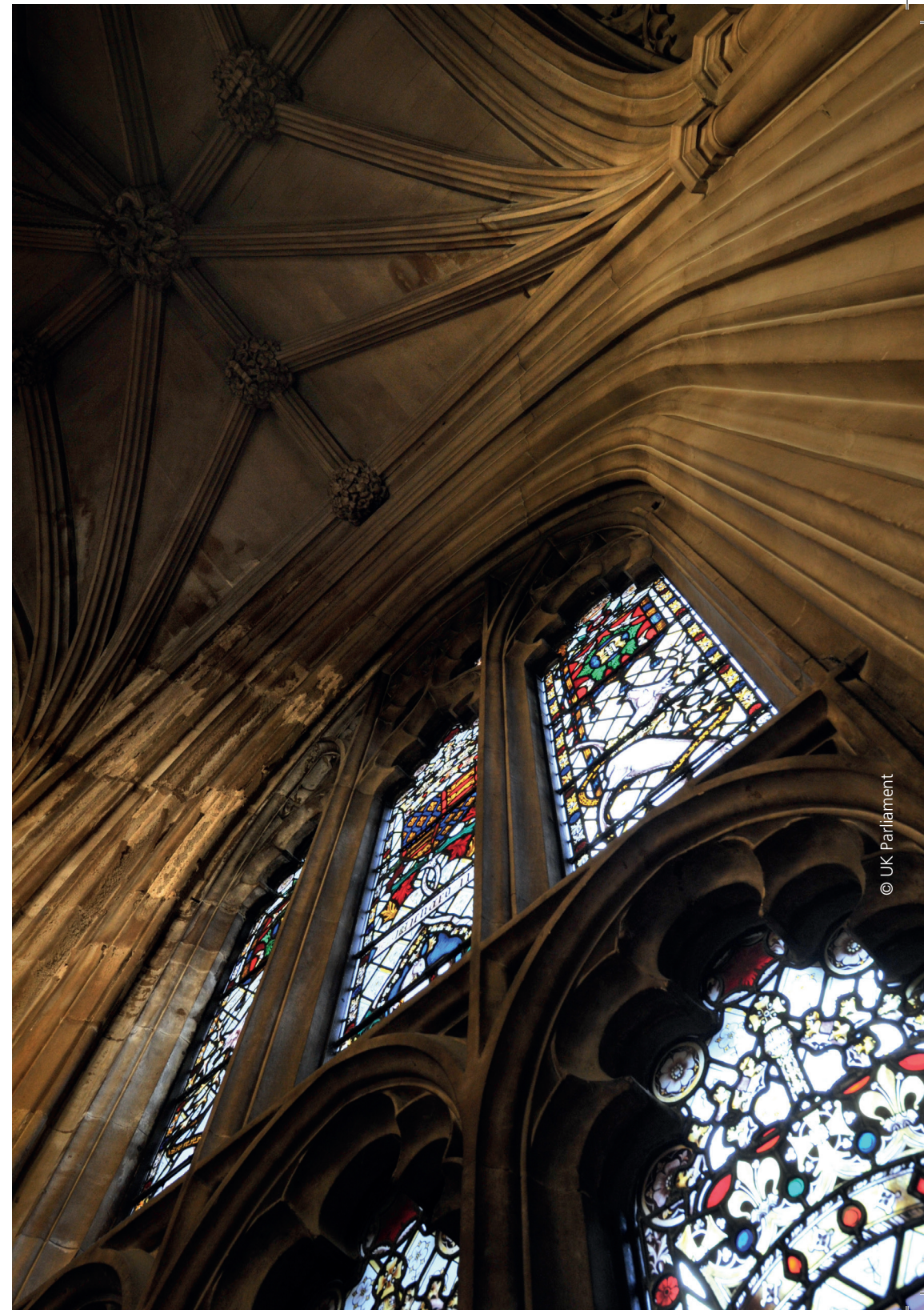


“There is no test *Hansard* can be set that they do not manage to pass with flying colours. However fast the bowling or however good the batting, *Hansard* always catch the ball or take the wicket.”



“We learn from each other. Everyone brings something different to the party. No one can know everything, but, more often than not, someone will have the answer.”

Will, Parliamentary Reporter



OUR PEOPLE

We value a good education, a love of words, an eye for detail and an ability to grapple with complex argument, but, truly, what binds us together is our team spirit. Our strong collaborative ethos enables staff to work together under pressure, sometimes for long stretches, producing reports of parliamentary debates that are available on the web just a few hours afterwards.

A sense of humour helps, as do our friendships. We have energy and enthusiasm, and we are always willing to offer help to our colleagues when it is needed. Loyalty is a key quality, and thanks to the interesting and challenging work and the unquenchable team spirit, many of our staff stay at *Hansard* for most, if not all, of their career.



“I am in the middle of reading a remarkable work-full of double-dealing, treachery, scorn and abuse. It is called *Hansard*.”



CREATIVITY

Translating speech into the written word is complex, so our reporters have to be creative and able to think imaginatively about language. Reporters produce grammatical, fluent copy often from fragmented and boisterous exchanges. Words and sentences can have multiple interpretations, so reporters need to make subtle judgments.

We are professional, interested in current affairs and great at solving problems. No two days are the same at *Hansard*. Each debate, whether on cannabis legalisation, caravan licensing or animal cruelty, presents unique challenges. Our reporters come from a wide range of educational backgrounds, but we all share the ability to think on our feet and make difficult decisions under pressure.



18 “My time at *Hansard* so far has been the best 18 months of my working life. I get to work with words every day, my colleagues are the most intelligent and warmest people I could hope to meet, and I spend all my time learning about interesting political topics from the debates that I report.

19 The postgraduate diploma course was a fantastic opportunity to learn about life in Parliament as well as preparing me incredibly well for my work as a reporter. It was challenging but a lot of fun. The tutors cared deeply about teaching the skills required and, in all my time as a student, I have never experienced such individual focus on my work, which enabled me to develop quickly.”

Charlie, Parliamentary Reporter

OUR TRAINING

A *Hansard* career begins with a rigorous three-month training course, followed by a further three months of work-based learning in which trainees put what they have learned into practice by working within a team of reporters. Reporters who pass the assessed training course are awarded a postgraduate diploma in parliamentary reporting accredited by City, University of London.

Small training groups are led by experienced and knowledgeable *Hansard* reporters and editors, and focus on parliamentary reporting, the law-making process and

parliamentary procedure. Trainees learn how to develop their writing and IT skills in a deadline-driven publishing environment.

Trainees also go behind the scenes and watch debates in the main Chamber and in Committee, to see how Parliament really works. The training course is wide-ranging and features an engaging mix of classroom teaching, one-to-one support and self-directed learning. It enables reporters to develop the skills, experience and confidence they need to build a career at *Hansard*.



OUR DEVELOPMENT

The House of Commons is committed to maintaining a skilled and motivated workforce and offers a wide range of internal and external training, shadowing and secondment opportunities that will enable you to learn new skills and develop existing ones in a workplace that prizes adaptability, speed and accuracy. From the beginning of your training, you will have regular one-to-one meetings with your line manager to discuss your work and

to identify development needs and opportunities.

Hansard offers a clear career progression, and we will make sure you have the training and support you need every step of the way. Aside from reporting, editing and managing, *Hansard* staff regularly work with other parts of Parliament on outreach and publication projects, and you will have a chance to get involved.





CAREER PROGRESSION

After finishing your training, you will join the team as a **Parliamentary Reporter**. A parliamentary reporter's day is varied: you will report a wide range of proceedings, from Committees debating Bills to high-profile parliamentary events such as the BHS inquiry.

House Reporters are on Parliament's front line: they sit in the Press Gallery above the main Chamber and report everything that is debated on the green benches of the House of Commons, from Prime Minister's Questions and Government statements on the most urgent matters of the day to single-issue constituency concerns.

Sub-Editors check, stitch together and publish the copy that reporters produce — the equivalent of two decent-sized novels in a busy Parliamentary week — and lead teams in producing Select Committee transcripts.

Managing Editors, who edit and publish debates from the main Chamber and deal with MPs' queries, also help to oversee the running of the organisation. The **Deputy Editor** and the **Editor** represent *Hansard* across the House service, setting strategy and direction. Backing up the whole operation, our **Administrators** ensure all the logistics run smoothly. In total, *Hansard* employs approximately 100 people.

OUR RECRUITMENT

If your application is successful you will be sent a written test. How good is your grammar? Are you up to speed with current affairs?

Then we invite you into Parliament to test your ability to understand complex arguments and to see whether you can work quickly and flexibly under pressure. You will be asked to produce a transcript of an MP's speech, to a deadline, so you will need to be a good typist.

At interview, we will be looking for a team player; someone who is interested in politics and the

workings of democracy; someone with energy and enthusiasm, a love of words and an eye for detail.

In your first year at *Hansard* you will have a unique opportunity to take part in an engaging and intensive training programme, working towards a Postgraduate Diploma in Parliamentary Reporting. The course will begin with three months of classroom-based work, comprehensively covering the art of reporting while frequently attending a variety of parliamentary debates, followed by six months of on-the-job training.



THINK THE JOB MIGHT BE FOR YOU?

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