

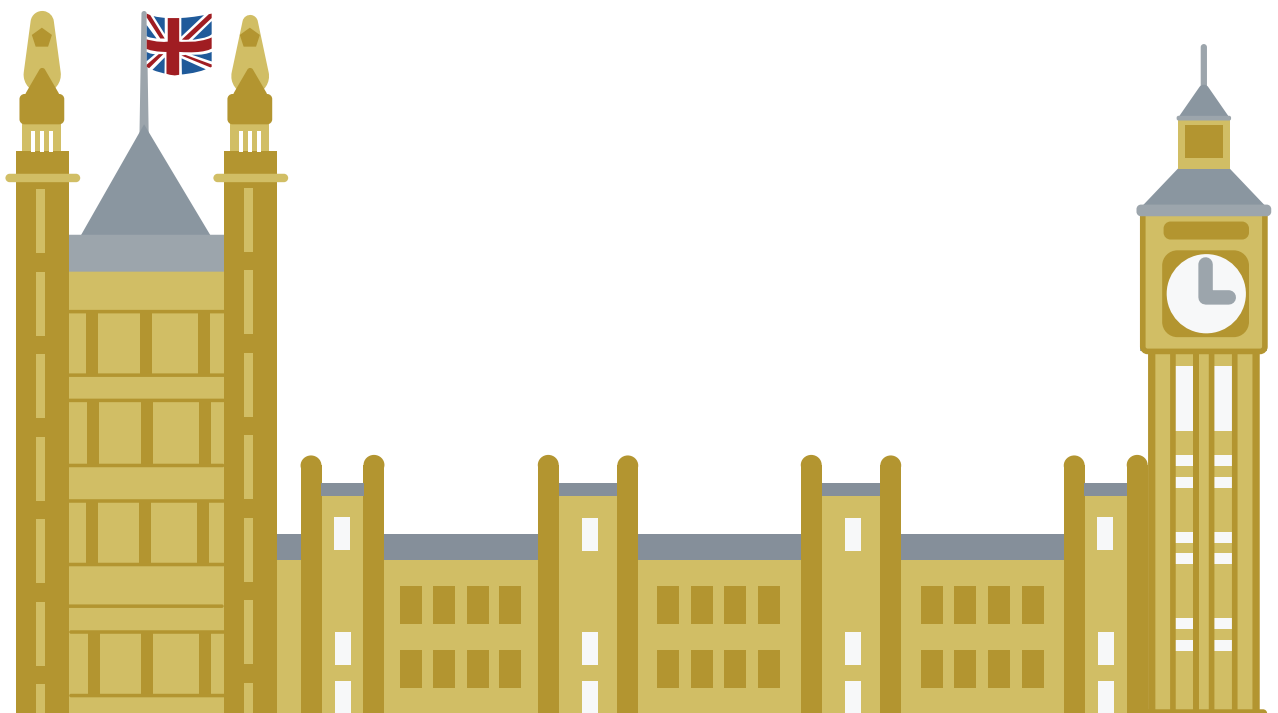


HOUSE OF LORDS



Information for witnesses appearing before Select Committees of the House of Lords

Updated May 2018



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Thank you for agreeing to give evidence to a House of Lords Committee. We want to make the process as straightforward for you as possible, so do contact the Clerk or Committee Assistant with any concerns or questions you may have.



Location

Committee Corridor

Oral evidence hearings usually take place in one of the rooms on the Committee Corridor within the Houses of Parliament. The Clerk or Committee Assistant will write to you before the meeting to confirm the time and room number. We ask witnesses to ensure they are ready and waiting outside the Committee Room 10 minutes before they are due to appear.

How to get there

The Houses of Parliament are located in Westminster in the centre of London and are well served by public transport. Westminster Underground station is a few minutes' walk from the public entrance, and there are a number of bus stops nearby. Transport for London's website can help you plan your journey.

Further information on finding the Houses of Parliament, including maps, can be found at www.parliament.uk/visiting/access/directions.

Entering Parliament

Please present yourself to the Visitor Assistants or the Police Officers at the main public entrance (marked 8 on the attached map), explaining that you are a witness to a Committee. There can be lengthy queues to pass through security, but if you present your letter of invitation you will be directed to the 'fast track' queue. Please still allow at least 10 minutes to pass through security.

You should then proceed to the Committee Room. Security staff and Attendants can provide directions.

Accessibility

If you have any access requirements or require any reasonable adjustments, including provision of this information in another format, please contact the Clerk or Committee Assistant in advance of the meeting. For more information about accessibility, please visit <http://www.parliament.uk/visiting/access/disabled-access/>.

Procedure

Before the meeting

When you arrive at the Committee Room you should wait outside in the Committee Corridor as most Committees have short private deliberations before the evidence sessions start.

When the Committee is ready the Chairman, Clerk or Committee Assistant will come out and will show you to your seat and indicate where you can place coats and bags.

You may be asked to give evidence alongside other organisations or individuals. If this is the case, you will be notified prior to the meeting.

Sometimes Committees hold several evidence sessions in one day. If this is the case, you are very welcome to arrive early (or stay behind afterwards) to watch the other sessions from the public seating in the Committee Room.

Beginning of the meeting

Once you are seated, the Chairman will formally welcome you and any other witnesses and ask you to introduce yourself. You may also be invited to make an opening statement, should you wish to. This should be kept brief (less than two minutes).

Questioning

The meeting then proceeds with the Chairman and Members of the Committee asking questions.

In the week ahead of the meeting you can normally expect to receive from the Clerk a list of questions which provide a framework for the evidence session. They are prepared by Committee staff for the Chairman and other Members of the Committee for guidance and to enable witnesses to prepare for the meeting, but there is no guarantee that Members will use them or follow the order in which they appear.

Members may not ask all the questions on the list and they may add others; the list is intended only to give an indication of the areas that may be covered.

Members and witnesses speak through the Chairman, who is referred to as “My Lord Chairman”. This includes women Chairmen. It is preferable to keep answers short and succinct. Except by prior arrangement with the Clerk, you should avoid using handouts or slides as these can pose difficulties for the transcription of the evidence (see below). You should avoid relying too heavily on prepared answers, although you may refer to notes.

Please remember to speak clearly: the Chairman may remind you of this.

Declaration of Interests

On the Committee's website you will be able to view a list of Members' Interests which are relevant to the inquiry.

Members may also declare relevant interests when speaking for the first time in the public meeting.

Votes

If the House of Lords is sitting at the time of the Committee meeting (Monday-Wednesday afternoons and Thursday from 11 am) it is possible that there will be a division (vote). A bell will ring if there is a vote and the Chairman will briefly adjourn the meeting in order to allow Members to go and record their votes.

Length of meeting

Oral evidence sessions vary in length but generally last between 40 and 90 minutes. The Clerk should be able to give you an indication before the meeting.

At the end of the meeting, the Chairman will thank you on behalf of the Committee and the Clerk or Committee Assistant will show you out of the room. Committees often have a short deliberative session after a public meeting to reflect on what has been heard.

Recording the meeting

A full transcript of the meeting will be taken. Most Committees now place an uncorrected transcript on the website. You will have an opportunity to make minor corrections, and the corrected version will subsequently be placed online.

All public meetings are webcast live, and are subsequently available to watch on www.parliamentlive.tv. Some meetings may also be broadcast on BBC Parliament.

Facilities

You will find lavatories half way along the Lords Committee corridor, which are signposted. There is also a water fountain outside the lavatories. Water is provided in the meeting.

The Jubilee Café provides refreshments for all visitors to the Palace of Westminster, and is located immediately after you pass through security.

Data protection

The House of Lords administration may process your personal data for the purpose of your oral evidence session or other committee functions. For more information please read the privacy notice for witnesses to House of Lords select committees, which is available on the parliamentary website or from the Clerk on request.

Following the inquiry

The Parliament website (www.parliament.uk) has links to each of the Committees, where you will find lists of forthcoming meetings, transcripts of oral evidence.

People you can expect to see in Committee meetings

Members: All Members of the Committee are Members of the House of Lords. They are appointed by the House each Session to serve on that particular Committee. Some Committees also have the power to co-opt other Peers on to a Committee for the duration of an inquiry. Any Member can ask questions of witnesses. Members sit around the horseshoe table (see diagram of Committee Room). Any other Peers who are not Members of the Committee can attend and also ask questions but they may not enter into deliberation nor may they vote.

Chairman: One Member of the Committee is appointed by the House as the Chairman. Members of the Committee ask questions through the Chairman, who is referred to as “My Lord Chairman”; witnesses normally do likewise with their answers. The Chairman sits at the head of the horseshoe table.

Clerk: A member of staff of the House of Lords who heads the Committee secretariat. The Clerk is responsible for administering the inquiry, providing procedural advice to the Committee as necessary, preparing briefing for the Committee and helping the Chairman to draft the reports. Clerks sit at the table next to the Chairman, but they (and the other members of staff, listed below) do not speak during public evidence sessions.

Committee Assistant: A member of staff who provides administrative support to the Committee, and who is often involved in communicating with witnesses before and after the Committee. They may sit at a side-table near the door, to greet visitors to the meeting.

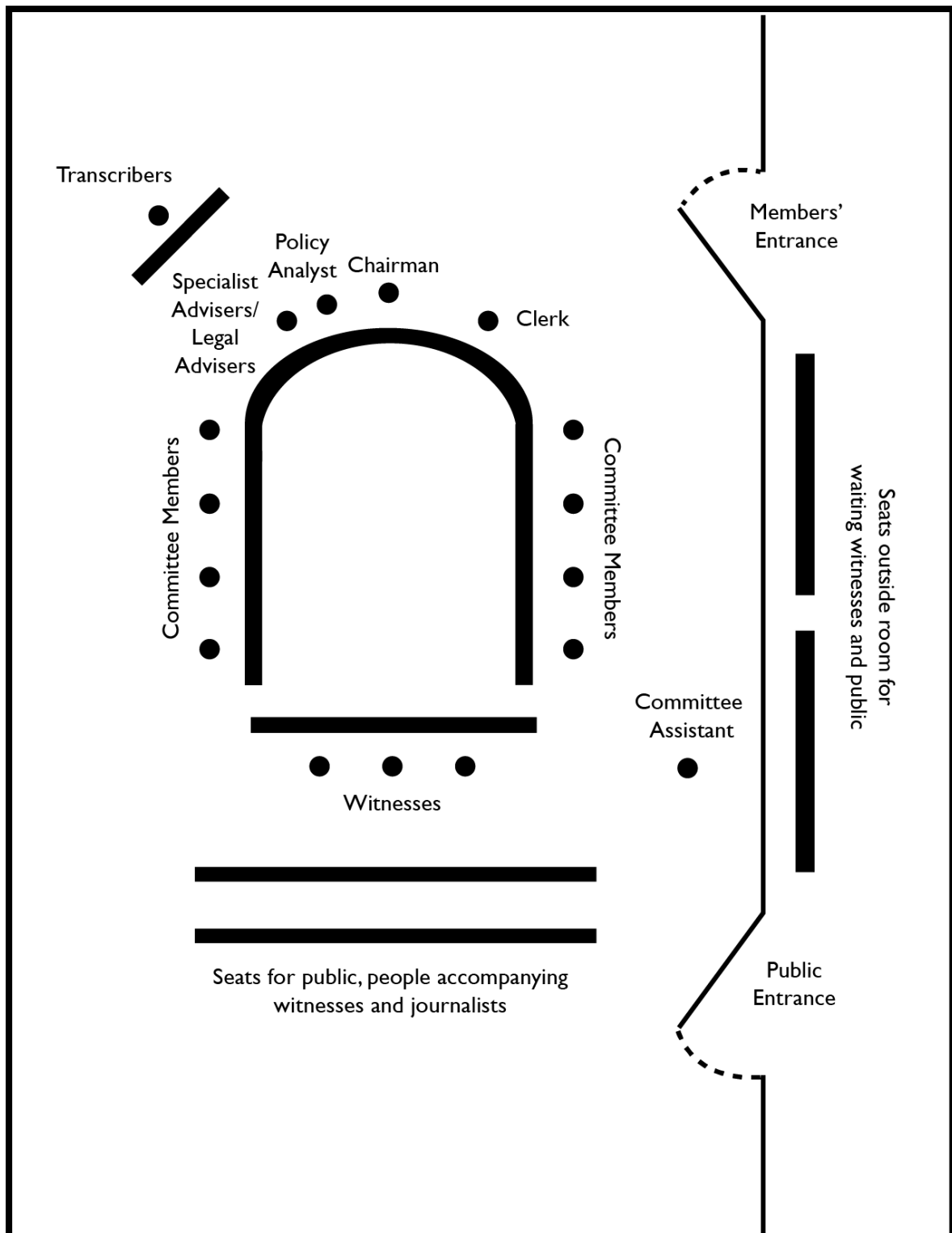
Policy Analyst: A member of staff who provides policy expertise and research support to the Committee, and who may assist the Clerk in drafting briefings and reports. They normally sit at the table with the Clerk and Chairman.

Specialist Adviser: For most Committee inquiries the Committee appoints one or more Specialist Advisers. These are experts in the field of the inquiry who provide independent advice to the Committee about policy relevant to the inquiry. They will often be involved in helping the Chairman draft and review the Report. These Advisers also sit at the table with the Committee.

Legal Adviser/Legal Assistant: Members of staff of the House of Lords who provide expert legal advice to the Committee. They normally sit with the other staff at the table. They only participate in inquiries that raise specific legal issues.

Transcriber: They produce the verbatim report of the evidence session. They will usually sit at a table to the side of the horseshoe.

Layout of a Select Committee Room



The precise room layout may differ slightly for some meetings.



THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER AND THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTATE

Directions by Public Transport



By Rail
Nearest stations are Charing Cross,
Victoria and Waterloo (20 - 30 minutes walk).



Underground
Westminster (Circle, District and Jubilee Lines).



By Bus
Buses 3, 11, 12, 24, 53, 87, 88, 148, 159, 211, 453, N2,
N3, N11, N87, N136, N155, N159 & N381 all stop nearby.



Use of public transport is advised as
the Abingdon Green car park is often full
and meter parking is expensive and scarce.



Santander Cycle Hire Docking Station

KEY	
(A) NORMAN SHAW NORTH	(1) NORTH ENTRANCE (VEHICLES ONLY)
(B) 1 DERBY GATE	(2) CANON ROW PASS OFFICE
(C) 1 CANON ROW	(3) HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT SHOP
(D) NORMAN SHAW SOUTH	(4) PORTCULLIS HOUSE MAIN ENTRANCE
(E) PORTCULLIS HOUSE	(5) TOURS TICKET OFFICE
(F) 1 PARLIAMENT STREET	(6) CARRIAGE GATES
(G) PALACE OF WESTMINSTER	(7) MEMBERS' ENTRANCE
(H) PARLIAMENTARY EDUCATION CENTRE	(8) CROMWELL GREEN (VISITOR) ENTRANCE
(J) MILLBANK HOUSE	(9) ST. STEPHENS ENTRANCE
(K) 7 MILLBANK	(10) PEERS' ENTRANCE
	(11) BLACK ROD'S GARDEN PASS OFFICE
	(12) EDUCATION CENTRE MAIN ENTRANCE
	(13) MILLBANK HOUSE MAIN ENTRANCE

