



Influencing the UK Parliament



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The IES is committed to promoting the crucial role of environmental science in society and an evidence-based approach to decision and policy making. One of the most effective ways this can be achieved is through influencing Parliament. It can however be time-consuming and difficult to navigate the parliament website. The IES has therefore put together this information pack to inform members of the various routes to influencing the UK Parliament over issues, policies or legislation.

There are a variety of ways in which an individual or organisation can influence the UK Parliament. The first point of call is to identify and contact your constituency MP. Although some MPs may have UK-wide responsibilities, their primary job is to represent their constituents.

Find and contact your MP

You can find your MP online simply by providing your postcode, on the Parliament website. You can also use this website to see their career history, where their interests lie, and which committees, groups or departments they work within or for which they are responsible.

By contacting your MP and notifying them about the issue you are concerned about, you immediately access Parliament. You may meet with your MP and discuss the matter and any further steps. You may ask them to send a letter to the relevant department or official responsible. They may provide you with information on how to contact any relevant All-Party Groups or Select Committees where you can voice your concerns further.

Find and contact a relevant Lord

Unlike MPs who can only represent individuals within their constituency, you can request any Lord (Peer) to ask a question or raise a debate on your behalf. It is important to identify and contact a Lord who has a particular interest in your issue. You can request information on different Lords' interests or advice on who to contact through the House of Lords Information Office (HLIO). Alternatively, you may research individual Lords in the House of Lords Hansard, which is the record of everything spoken in the House to identify where their interests lie.

Next steps

Once you have established dialogue with your MP, another relevant MP or Lord, there are several ways they may help you influence Parliament.

Questions to Ministers - Parliamentary Questions (PQs) are used by MPs to seek information or to press for action. They oblige Government Ministers to explain and defend the work, policy, decisions and actions of their Departments.

There are four types of PQs; oral, written, cross-cutting and urgent. Cross-cutting and urgent PQs are rarely used. Oral questions are where an MP meets a Minister face to face during parliamentary question time. Although lacking sufficient time for depth or debate, they do promote the issue to the House of Commons, media and wider public. Written questions are used by MPs to attempt to extract more detailed information from the Government than would be available from an oral question or to press for action. These are becoming an increasingly popular strategy for MPs to voice the opinions of their constituents.

Adjournment/Westminster Hall debates - Adjournment debates allow the Commons to have a general debate on a subject or policy without requiring the house to vote. There are several different types of adjournment debates; some are general debates about a subject or Government policy, while others allow backbenchers to raise constituency issues which bear some relevance to Government policy and to obtain a response from a Minister.

Early Day Motions - Early Day Motions (EDMs) are formal motions submitted for debate in the Commons. However, only a few are ever debated. Rather, they are primarily used to publicise the views of individual MPs and to raise awareness of a specific event, campaign, or policy. They often generate considerable public interest and media coverage. Furthermore, they gauge parliamentary support for the motion's cause.

10-minute Rule Bill/Private Members Bills - 10-minute Rule Bills are where an MP (often a backbencher) is given ten minutes in the House of Commons to propose new Bills. However, they are mostly used by MPs to voice their opinions on a subject or aspect of existing legislation and to stimulate publicity for a cause. Private Members Bills, for which the 10-minute Rule is used, are public bills introduced by MPs and Lords who are not Government Ministers. They rarely become law, although there have been some notable exceptions (e.g. the 1999 Military Action Against Iraq (Parliamentary Approval) Bill).

You can oppose a Private Members Bill through your MP, a Lord, or by writing to the Government department responsible for the Bill, or lobbying through APPGs.

Select Committees - Select Committees are cross-party groups responsible for the scrutiny of a wide variety of areas from specialist topics to Government departments. Several committees in both the HoC and HoLs have relevance to environmental matters (**Appendix 1**).

Most Commons Select Committees are responsible for the scrutiny of Government departments. Their role is to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the relevant Government department and its associated public bodies. Lords Select Committees are concerned with specialist subjects such as education, science, or economic affairs.

An individual may take part in a Select Committee inquiry by submitting evidence or information. These inquiries are often highly influential and can be a very powerful way of influencing Parliament.

All-party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) - These are cross-party interest groups, incorporating members of both Houses. However, unlike Select Committees they are informal, having no

official status within Parliament. There are many APPGs that are concerned with the environment (**Appendix 1**), and are mostly run by backbenchers. Despite being informal, they are able to raise awareness for a particular issue and coordinate with other individuals and organisations outside of Parliament. APPGs are often a good place to start influencing parliament, being less formal and more broadly targeted than Select Committees.

This is a guide for Members on ways to seek influence on Parliamentary debate and Government policy. However, if you have had experience of this, we would welcome any further information or comments to be shared with other members.

An organisational map of the decision-making process in UK Government if provided in **Figure 1**. A list of the relevant cross-party groups and individuals, and a list of the full links used in this document appears in the appendix.

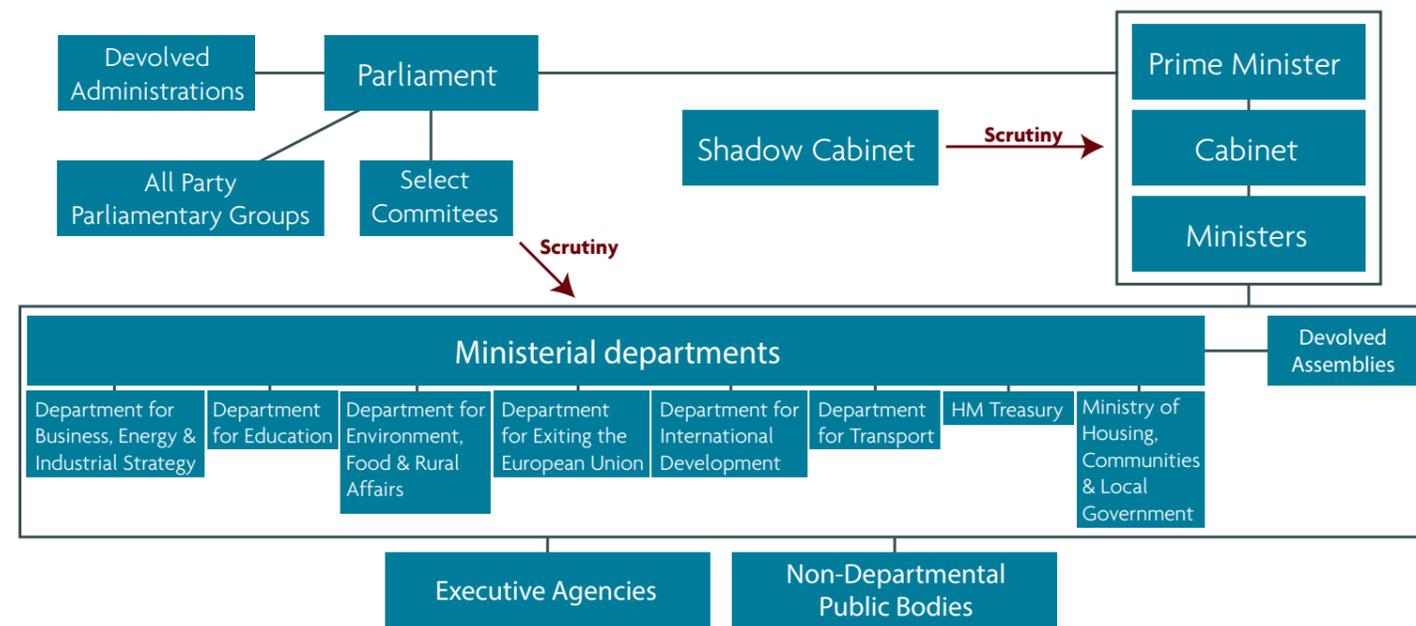


Figure 1: Decision-making processes in UK Government including the most commonly relevant government departments.

Appendix

Appendix 1: List of relevant bodies for decision-making

¹Parliament Select Committees

Commons

Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee
 Communities and Local Government Committee
 Education Committee
 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee
 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Sub-Committee
 Environmental Audit Committee
 European Scrutiny Committee
 Exiting the European Union Committee
 High Speed Rail Bill Select Committee
 International Development Committee
 Science and Technology Committee
 Transport Committee

Lords

EU Energy and Environment Sub-Committee
 EU External Affairs Committee
 EU Internal Market Sub-Committee
 NERC Act 2006 Committee
 Science and Technology Committee (Lords)
 Science and Technology Sub-Committee I

²All-Party Groups

The register is updated on a six-weekly basis. See reference for latest information.

³Cabinet

Prime Minister - Theresa May
 Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy - Greg Clark
 Secretary of State for Education - Damian Hinds
 Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - Michael Gove
 Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union - David Davis
 Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government - Sajid Javid
 Secretary of State for International Development - Penny Mordaunt
 Secretary of State for Transport - Chris Grayling

⁴Shadow Cabinet

Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition - Jeremy Corbyn
 Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Co-National Campaign Coordinator - Andrew Gwynee
 Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy - Rebecca Long-Bailey
 Shadow Secretary of State for Education - Angela Rayner
 Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - Sue Hayman
 Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union - Keir Starmer
 Shadow Secretary of State for International Development - Kate Osamor
 Shadow Secretary of State for Transport - Andy McDonald

Appendix 2: List of sources

Find and contact your MP

Parliament website
www.findyourmp.parliament.uk

Check an MPs' voting records

Theyworkforyou.com
www.theyworkforyou.com

Find and contact a relevant Lord

House of Lords Information Office
www.parliament.uk/business/lords/get-involved-with-the-lords/house-of-lords-external-communications

Members of the House of Lords

www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/lords

Hansard of Commons and Lords

hansard.parliament.uk

Next steps

Parliamentary Questions

www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-information-office/p01.pdf

Adjournment Debates

www.parliament.uk/about/how/business/adjournment

Early Day Motions

www.parliament.uk/edm

Select Committees

www.parliament.uk/about/how/committees/select

All-party Parliamentary Groups

www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-financial-interests/parliamentary-commissioner-for-standards/registers-of-interests/register-of-all-party-party-parliamentary-groups

10 minute Rule Bill/Private Members Bill

www.parliament.uk/about/how/laws/bills/private-members

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The Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES)

is a charitable organisation which promotes and raises public awareness of environmental science by supporting professional scientists and academics working in this crucial arena.

The IES promotes an evidence-based approach to decision and policy making and are devoted to championing the crucial role of environmental science in ensuring the well-being of humanity now, and in the future.

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