



# 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. Not all Lords have publicly-available contact information.

## 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 different types of PQs; oral, written and urgent. 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. Large numbers of written questions are submitted daily by MPs on behalf of their constituents or organisations.

**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 gauge parliamentary support for the motion's cause, though they do not carry any direct legislative weight.

**10-minute Rule Bill/Private Members' Bills** - 10-minute Rule Bills are where a backbench MP 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, such as those brought before Parliament under the 10-minute Rule, are introduced by MPs and Lords who are not Government Ministers. They rarely become law or influence Government legislation, although there have been some notable exceptions (e.g. Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act 2006).

You can support or oppose a Private Member's Bill through your MP or a Lord, by writing to the Government department responsible for the Bill, or by lobbying through All-Party Parliamentary Groups (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 House of Commons and House of Lords 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.

There are also Public Bill Committees responsible for scrutinising the content of Public Bills. They have a formal role in discussing individual pieces of legislation and debating possible amendments. These Committees may also receive evidence.

**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. If you want any more information about influencing policy, or have insights which you think would be valuable to share with peers, please do [get in touch](#).

An organisational map of the decision-making process in UK Government is 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.

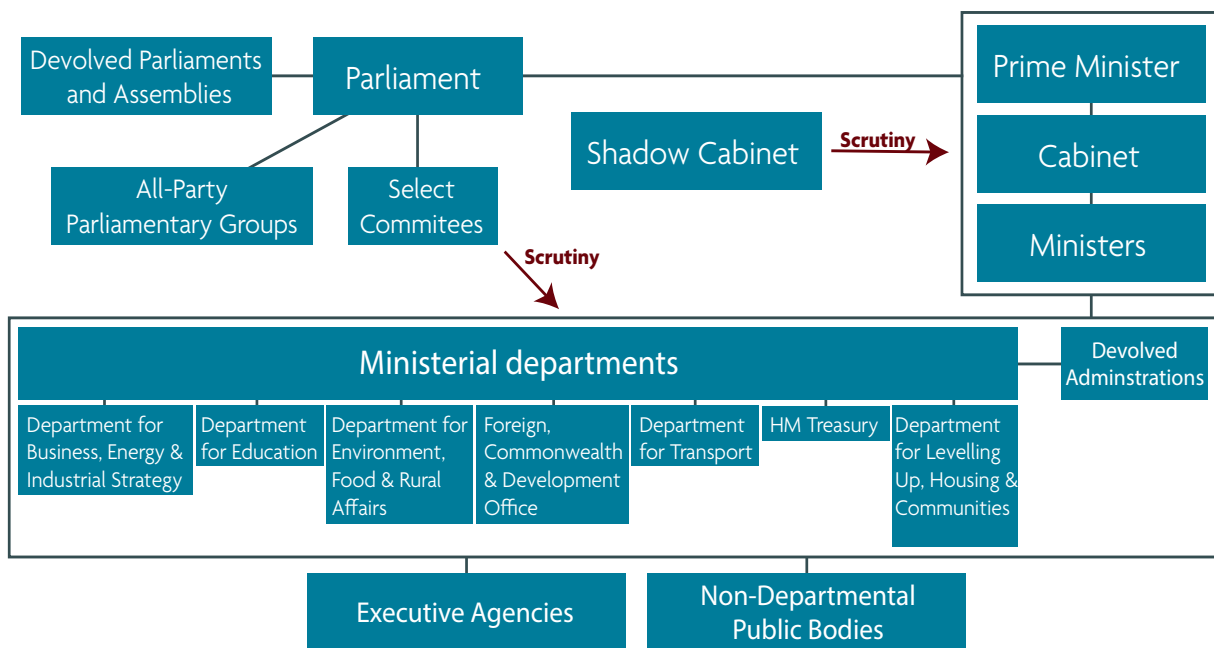


Figure 1: Interactions and scrutiny in UK Government including the most commonly relevant Government departments.

# Appendix

## Appendix 1: List of most commonly relevant bodies for decision-making

### Parliament Select Committees

This is a list of the most commonly relevant parliamentary committees as of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022. For a full list of Select Committees and their work, see: <https://committees.parliament.uk>.

#### Commons

Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee  
 Education Committee  
 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee  
 Environmental Audit Committee  
 International Development Committee  
 International Trade Committee  
 Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee  
 Public Accounts Committee  
 Science and Technology Committee  
 Transport Committee

#### Lords

Built Environment Committee  
 Environment and Climate Change Committee  
 EU Environment Sub-Committee  
 EU Goods Sub-Committee  
 EU Services Sub-Committee  
 Food, Poverty, Health and Environment Committee  
 Industry and Regulators Committee  
 International Agreements Committee  
 Land Use in England Committee  
 Risk Assessment and Risk Planning Committee  
 Science and Technology Committee (Lords)

### All-Party Parliamentary Groups

A [publicly-available register](#) of All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) and their members is updated every six weeks.

### Cabinet

The Cabinet is the team of the most senior ministers in the Government who are chosen by the Prime Minister to lead on specific policy areas. Their appointment is periodical, subject to political processes, and an updated list of Cabinet members can be found at <https://members.parliament.uk/Government/Cabinet>.

As of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022, some of the most commonly relevant Cabinet Ministers are:

Prime Minister - Rishi Sunak  
 Chancellor of the Exchequer – Jeremy Hunt  
 Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy - Grant Shapps  
 Secretary of State for Education - Gillian Keegan  
 Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - Thérèse Coffey  
 Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs – James Cleverly  
 Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities - Michael Gove  
 Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade - Kemi Badenoch  
 Secretary of State for Transport - Mark Harper

### Shadow Cabinet

The Shadow Cabinet is the team of the most senior spokespeople chosen by the Leader of the Opposition to lead on specific policy areas and to scrutinise their Cabinet counterparts. As with the Cabinet, their appointment is periodical and subject to change. An updated list of Shadow Cabinet members can be found at <https://members.parliament.uk/Opposition/Cabinet>.

As of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022, some of the most commonly relevant Shadow Cabinet Spokespeople are:

Leader of His Majesty's Official Opposition - Keir Starmer

Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer – Rachel Reeves

Shadow Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing, Communities & Local Government – Lisa Nandy

Shadow Secretary of State for Business and Industrial Strategy - Jonathan Reynolds

Shadow Secretary of State of Climate Change and Net Zero - Ed Miliband

Shadow Secretary of State for Education - Bridget Phillipson

Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - Jim McMahon

Shadow Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs – David Lammy

Shadow Secretary of State for International Development - Preet Kaur Gill

Shadow Secretary of State for International Trade – Nick Thomas-Symonds

Shadow Secretary of State for Transport - Louise Haigh

## Appendix 2: List of sources

### Find and contact your MP

Parliament website

[members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP](https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP)

### Check MPs' voting records

Theyworkforyou.com

[www.theyworkforyou.com](https://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](https://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](https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/lords)

### Hansard of Commons and Lords

[hansard.parliament.uk](https://hansard.parliament.uk)

### Next steps

#### Parliamentary Questions

[questions-statements.parliament.uk](https://questions-statements.parliament.uk)

#### Adjournment Debates

[www.parliament.uk/about/how/business/adjournment](https://www.parliament.uk/about/how/business/adjournment)

#### Early Day Motions

[www.parliament.uk/edm](https://www.parliament.uk/edm)

#### Select Committees

[www.parliament.uk/about/how/committees/select](https://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](https://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)

#### Private Members' Bills

[www.parliament.uk/about/how/laws/bills/private-members](https://www.parliament.uk/about/how/laws/bills/private-members)

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**About the Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES)**

The IES is a visionary organisation leading debate, dissemination, and promotion of environmental science and sustainability. We promote an evidence-based approach to decision and policy making.

We 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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