



## **House of Lords – Information for New Peers**

### **Timings of the day:**

During the current Hybrid proceedings, the House sits at the following times:

Monday: 1pm

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday: 12pm

Friday (if sitting): 11am

The House only sits occasionally on Fridays. Sitting Fridays are announced in the Forthcoming Business document.

For information purposes, the times the House sits at normally (prior to the pandemic) are as follows:

Monday and Tuesday: 2:30pm

Wednesday: 3pm

Thursday: 11am

Friday (if sitting): 10am

### **Order of business:**

The current order of business in the Chamber is as follows:

Prayers; Oral Questions; PNQ(s) (if applicable) followed by main business,

If there are new peer introductions, oaths, Royal Assent, notification of deaths or retirement or statements from the Woolsack then these will all happen after Prayers and before Oral Questions.

### **Participation in current hybrid proceedings:**

During the current hybrid format, peers can participate either in person or virtually but are encouraged to participate virtually if possible due to the Covid-19 situation.

You can sign up to participate by either by emailing the Government Whips' Office at [HOLGovernmentWhips@parliament.uk](mailto:HOLGovernmentWhips@parliament.uk) or by signing up on the website at <https://www.lordswhips.org.uk/>.

When your participation for the proceedings that day has been confirmed (by the GWO) you will receive an email shortly before the House sits from VPAT (the Virtual Proceedings Administration Team) with a link you will need to click to join the meeting. There, you will be 'onboarded' and put in a queue of speakers according to the speakers' lists. All House of Lords proceedings are currently done using Zoom.



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The most recent Procedure Committee guidance for participating in Hybrid proceedings, effective from 19 April 2021, is available here: [Guidance on Hybrid House and Hybrid Grand Committee from the Procedure and Privileges Committee to take effect from 19 April 2021](#)

## Participating in proceedings:

If you would like to take part in a Bill, then you need to sign up to the participants' list, which opens and closes 2 working days before the Bill starts. This can be done online at <https://www.lordswhips.org.uk/> when you have an account set up, or you can phone or email the GWO. You will then be contacted to be asked which amendments you would like to speak on once you are on the list. If you would like to table an amendment to the Bill itself, you will need to contact the Public Bill Office at [HLPublicBills@parliament.uk](mailto:HLPublicBills@parliament.uk).

You should receive an email from your party/ group letting you know when the list is open and you can sign up to be a speaker.

Likewise, if you would like to speak on an Oral Question, you would also contact the GWO or sign up online using the Lords Whips website.

## Tabling oral questions:

There are two types of oral questions: normal oral questions and topical oral questions.

Question time in the House of Lords takes place at the start of business on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and happens directly after prayers. On Mondays there are four normal oral questions, and Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays there are three. The fourth question is a topical oral question on those days.

## For normal oral questions:

- A ballot takes place at 1pm four weeks in advance of the question being asked.
- You cannot enter this ballot if you have a normal oral question down already.
- You can only enter one question per ballot, and questions need to be entered for each ballot (i.e. we cannot roll entries over).
- There is only one ballot open at a time.
- Each member can only ask seven oral questions in a calendar year.
- To enter the ballot, email [minute@parliament.uk](mailto:minute@parliament.uk) and the Table Office will gladly steer any member through the process.

## For topical oral questions:

- Members may enter the ballot even if they already have one oral question on the order paper; but they may not enter the ballot if they already have an oral question on the order paper for the day concerned.
- No member may ask more than four topical oral questions in one calendar year.
- Questions must be topical – i.e. covered by at least one significant media source in the preceding few days.
- No more than one question on a subject may be accepted for inclusion in the ballot and priority is given to the first which is tabled.
- For the topical oral question on a Tuesday, the ballot opens at 3pm the Wednesday before and is drawn at 1pm that Friday. For the topical oral question on a



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Wednesday, the ballot opens at 3pm the Thursday before and is drawn at 1pm on the Monday. For the topical oral question on a Thursday, the ballot opens at 3pm the Friday before and is drawn at 1pm that Tuesday.

- To enter a ballot, email [minute@parliament.uk](mailto:minute@parliament.uk) and the Table Office will gladly steer any member through the process.

## Private notice questions:

- These are the equivalent of Urgent Questions in the Commons, and are for matters so urgent they demand answers before a topical or normal oral question could be asked.
- They are determined by the Lord Speaker.
- They have to be submitted by 12noon on the working day before they are to be asked to [lordspeaker@parliament.uk](mailto:lordspeaker@parliament.uk) and the Lord Speaker will then decide which PNQs he wishes to accept and which he wants to decline by 2pm that day, for PNQs the following day.

For new members of the House it is helpful to highlight that Members of the House who have not yet made their maiden speech may not table oral questions or questions for short debate, but may table questions for written answer. A maiden speech cannot be made through participating in an oral question.

## **Maiden speeches:**

The initial speech made by a House of Lords member is known as a maiden speech. A member wishing to make their maiden speech should do so in a debate with a speaker's list. The speech itself is expected to be less than 10 minutes long and uncontroversial, not expressing views that would provoke an interruption.

## **Documents in relation to proceedings of the House:**

### Produced by the House Authorities:

**Order Paper:** The Order Paper details the Items of Business tabled for that day. This document replicates the first page of the House of Lords Business (HLB), unless changes have been updated since the last publication of the HLB, in which case an updated Order Paper is produced. The Order Paper is available each morning ahead of the House sitting that day. The online order paper is available to view here:

<https://lordsbusiness.parliament.uk/>

**House of Lords Business (HLB) (also known as 'The Green'):** The House of Lords Business indicates what business has been tabled over the forthcoming weeks. In addition, it contains information on tabled business: Questions for Written Answer; Questions for Short Debate, and on Bills currently in progress, Delegated Legislation. It also provides information on upcoming retirements and on scheduled Committee meetings. Towards the back of HLB is the minutes of proceedings for the previous days business and finally a listing of papers that have been laid in the House of Lords on the previous day. A copy is available to view here: <https://lordsbusiness.parliament.uk/> (Click the link and then click 'House of Lords Business' on the left hand side to open up a PDF).



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Produced by the Government Whips Office:

Today's List: The Today's List is produced by the Government Whips Office. It gives details of the items of business taking place in the Chamber (and Grand Committee) that day, including the order in which peers are expected to speak and the groupings (for debate) of amendments tabled. An accompanying 'Today's List Annex' is produced to indicate those members who will be speaking to the Amendment groupings (for Committee stage and subsequent Bill stages where there are amendments grouped). The TL is available to view on the Government Whips' Office website: <https://www.lordswhips.org.uk/todays-lists>

Forthcoming Business: Forthcoming Business indicates what business is expected to occur during proceedings for the next couple of weeks; it includes business that has not yet been tabled and is subject to change. It also provides information on sitting Fridays and recess dates when available. A link to Forthcoming Business is available here: <https://www.lordswhips.org.uk/fb>

**'Valuing Everyone' training:**

Valuing Everyone training is a mandatory training course for all staff and new peers, designed to help them recognise bullying and harassment in the House of Lords and feel empowered to tackle and prevent it.

To book a place on the 'Valuing Everyone' training course, please click on the following link: <https://intranet.parliament.uk/people-offices/icgpl/training/>

Once you have clicked that, please scroll down the page to where it says 'Book Your Place Now' and go to 'Members/ Peers - book your place on ACT here'. Click the link, and it will take you to a page that asks for your parliamentary email address and password. From there, please choose a workshop listed for a time and date that suits you from underneath where it says 'Book a place on this workshop' and click 'sign up'.

**Catering services:**

The House of Lords restaurant is called the River Restaurant, located near the Cholmondeley Room and the terrace overlooking the River Thames.

House of Commons restaurants include The Debate, The Terrace and Bellamy's, amongst others.

The catering facilities' opening hours and menus are available to view here: <https://intranet.parliament.uk/catering-outlets/restaurants-bars/>