

## How 2 Lobby the House of Lords

### Introduction

The Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is the supreme law making body in the United Kingdom and British overseas territories and is made up of two houses – The (lower) House of Commons and the (upper) House of Lords. It alone has parliamentary sovereignty and is headed by the British Monarch.

The House of Lords acts as the second chamber of the UK Parliament and its main functions are to hold the Government to account, make law and investigate areas of policy. As of March 2010, the House of Lords had 736 members and although membership was once a right of birth to hereditary peers, a series of recent reforms has ensured that only a small number form part of the membership.

### Powers

Legislation of any kind can be introduced in the House of Lords, with the exception of money bills, which always originate in the House of Commons.

As well as debating legislation, The House of Lords also has the power to delay or amend bills and even reject them, though the ability to do this is considerably restricted by the Parliament Acts.

The House of Lords can delay a money bill for no longer than one month, while it can delay other public bills for up to the length of a calendar year.

### Composition

Unlike MPs in the House of Commons, members of the Lords are not elected and do not represent individual constituencies. Despite this, they have experience and independent expertise on a wide range of subjects, given the eclectic make up of the House.

Lords attend the House on a voluntary basis and few have a secretary or even an office, but that doesn't mean you can't influence them.

Many Lords belong to a political party but a substantial number are "cross benchers", meaning they are not aligned to one group. Currently there are five types of Lords:

#### Life Peers

Most of the members of the House of Lords are life peers. They are appointed by the monarch on the advice of the Prime Minister for the duration of their lives, often for services to the country.

#### Law Lords

The country's most senior judges, known as Lords of Appeal in Ordinary, are appointed to the House of Lords, which is also the highest court in the land.

#### Hereditary Peers

The House of Lords Act 1999 removed all but 92 peers who inherited their titles from their family. The 92 who remain are no longer able to pass on to their children the right to sit as a member of the House of Lords.

#### Bishops

The 26 most senior Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of England are members of the House of Lords.

## People Peers

The House of Lords Appointment Commission, created in May 2000, makes non-political appointments to the House of Lords. People can either nominate themselves or be nominated to be considered and there are currently 15 People Peers.

## How can I influence the Lords?

Influencing a member of the House of Lords is not as straightforward as it may be for an MP. You need to find a member who has an interest in the issues that you want to make a point about. You can do this in two ways:

- Some members of the House of Lords sit on various All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) e.g. youth affairs. These are useful to influence if your issue is covered by a particular group. You can find a list of who sits on the APPGs at:  
[www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmallparty/memi01.ht](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmallparty/memi01.ht)
- If your issue has previously been debated in the House of Lords, you can find who spoke about it and contact them to raise your concerns.

To find out what members have said in speeches, go to:

[www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199697/ldhansrd/pdvn/home.htm#search](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199697/ldhansrd/pdvn/home.htm#search)

## How do I contact the House of Lords?

The House of Lords Information Office can help you find out who is responsible for different areas of policy within the House of Lords, and whether any of its members are from your local area. You may contact them by phone on (020 7219 3107) or by email at [hinfo@parliament.uk](mailto:hinfo@parliament.uk).

You can also write to them direct at the following address:

**Information Service  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW**

## For more information

**about BYC training:**

[www.byc.org.uk/training](http://www.byc.org.uk/training)

**or to download further resources:**

[www.byc.org.uk/resources](http://www.byc.org.uk/resources)

## British Youth Council

**We empower young people across the UK to have a say and be heard.**

[www.byc.org.uk](http://www.byc.org.uk)

0845 458 1489

[mail@byc.org.uk](mailto:mail@byc.org.uk)