



House of Commons
Public Administration
and Constitutional Affairs
Committee

A smaller House of Lords: The report of the Lord Speaker's committee on the size of the House

Thirteenth Report of Session 2017–19

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 6 November 2018*

Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee

The Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the reports of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration and the Health Service Commissioner for England, which are laid before this House, and matters in connection therewith; to consider matters relating to the quality and standards of administration provided by civil service departments, and other matters relating to the civil service; and to consider constitutional affairs.

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Introduction

1. The Lords Speaker's committee on the size of the House, which was chaired by Lord Burns (the Burns Committee), was established in December 2016 and the *Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on Size of the House* (the Burns Report) was published on 31 October 2017. The House of Lords debated the Burns Report on Tuesday 19 December 2017. A total of 94 Members spoke in the debate. During this debate a great majority agreed with the proposals within the report.¹ We launched our inquiry on the 23 January 2018 and held an evidence session with Lord Burns to explore the Burns Committee proposals, on 30 January 2018. We would like to thank Lord Burns for giving evidence to this inquiry.

2. Following this evidence session, the Prime Minister wrote to the Lord Speaker on 20 February 2018 to give her response to the Burns Report. On 24 October 2018 the Burns Committee published its second report, setting out the departures and appointment for the first year after the general election in June 2107. Our consideration of the Burns Committee proposals has taken all of these subsequent events into account. We have also drawn on the work of our predecessor Committee which was conducting the inquiry into *An effective Second Chamber? The House of Lords inquiry*. This inquiry was halted by the General Election in 2017 and a summary of its findings was published in *Sixteenth Report of the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee of session 2016–2017, The work of the Committee during the 2015–17 Parliament*.²

1 [Q2](#)

2 [Sixteenth Report of the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee of session 2016–2017, *The work of the Committee during the 2015–17 Parliament*, HC 1151, 2 May 2017, para 23](#)

1 The role and reform of the House of Lords

The role of the House of Lords

3. The House of Lords may be regarded as secondary to the House of Commons, but it fulfils a vital complementary role in the UK's legislative and governmental system. Two-chamber parliaments are common around the world, particularly in larger and more populous states—among them France, Germany, Australia, Canada and the US. The classic roles of second chambers in such settings are to inject “second thought” into the policy-making process, thus preventing over-hasty decision-making, and to broaden the range of voices heard in that process.³

4. It may appear to mirror the House of Commons in its three core functions of scrutinising legislation, holding government to account and acting as a national forum for deliberation and debate, but the way in which the House of Lords carries out these functions is in many respects quite distinct.⁴ The House of Lords is often referred to as the revising chamber, because it carries out the detailed analysis and revising of legislation. For example, as former Lord Speaker Baroness Hayman outlined in evidence to our predecessor Committee:⁵

... most commentators would say that the detailed scrutiny of legislation, line by line, works well in the House of Lords and that the Lords has complemented the work of the Commons, particularly since the increased use of timetabling in the Commons and the fact that much legislation comes to us without having had detailed scrutiny. That complementarity works well.

5. The 1911 and 1949 Parliament Acts removed the House of Lords' absolute veto over bills starting in the House of Commons, reducing this to a power of delay. These changes cemented the House of Lords' role as a primarily revising chamber that focuses on legislative detail, and occasionally asks the House of Commons to think again.

6. But the House of Lords also plays an important role in executive oversight. It has a well-developed system of select committees which differs from that of the House of Commons. Such committees are cross cutting, whereas in the House of Commons they mainly shadow government departments. For example, the House of Lords EU Committee has seven subcommittees, focusing on specific areas of EU issues. This committee structure is currently under review.⁶ House of Lords select committees often bring together senior figures in their fields, and their reports are well respected and influential. Some important House of Lords committees, such as the Constitution Committee and the Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee (DPRRC) provide specialist input into scrutiny of legislation. There are also joint committees of both Houses, such as the Joint Committee on Human Rights, whose reports can be influential in debates.

3 Samuel C Patterson and Anthony Mughan, *Senates: Bicameralism in the Contemporary World* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999).

4 Meg Russell, *The Contemporary House of Lords: Westminster Bicameralism Revived*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013), p 79.

5 Oral Evidence taken on 31 January 2017, HC (2016–17) 811, [Q2](#) [Baroness Hayman]

6 House of Lords, [Select Committee review in the House of Lords launched](#), 18 January 2018

7. In addition to legislation and committees, the House of Lords also holds general debates and question times with ministers, which again are structured quite differently from the House of Commons. Debate is generally less adversarial along party political lines than that in the House of Commons in part due to the lack of a Government majority in the Chamber, and the presence of a large number of Crossbenchers who do not take a party whip. The atmosphere may be more civil and less partisan, but questions and debates can be all the more challenging for ministers, who must defend government policy in an environment containing many respected subject specialists.

8. Hence there is a good deal of complementarity between the two chambers which together make up the UK Parliament. As Baroness Hayman put it in her evidence to our predecessor Committee:⁷

I also think that the joint role in holding Government to account in slightly different ways—select committees working on different bases, but the questioning, the debates, the general calling Ministers to account—is done well in the Lords, as it is done well in the Commons.

History of reform of the House of Lords

9. Despite its useful work, the House of Lords has long been a controversial institution. Pressure for reform can be traced back centuries. The Chamber itself is the product of gradual evolution, in response to these reform pressures and to broader changes in British society, politics and the House of Commons. While never having been subject to a single radical reform, the House of Lords has nonetheless been subject to a series of incremental changes since the early 20th century, which taken together have had significant effect.⁸

10. The tension between the demand for radical change and the requirement to accept compromise is demonstrated in the preamble to the Parliament Act 1911, which brought the relationship between the two UK Houses of Parliament into the modern era:

Whereas it is expedient that provision should be made for regulating the relations between the two Houses of Parliament:

And whereas it is intended to substitute for the House of Lords as it at present exists a Second Chamber constituted on a popular instead of hereditary basis, but such substitution cannot be immediately brought into operation:

And whereas provision will require hereafter to be made by Parliament in a measure effecting such substitution for limiting and defining the powers of the new Second Chamber, but it is expedient to make such provision as in this Act appears for restricting the existing powers of the House of Lords.

11. This tension can be seen in the history of reforms and reform proposals since 1911.

⁷ Oral Evidence taken on 31 January 2017, HC (2016–17) 811, [Q2](#) [Baroness Hayman]

⁸ For further discussion see: Chris Ballinger, *The House of Lords 1911–2011: A Century of Non-Reform* (Oxford: Hart, 2012); Meg Russell, *The Contemporary House of Lords: Westminster Bicameralism Revived*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013); [History of the House of Lords: A Short Introduction](#), House of Lords Library Note, LLN 2017/020, 27 April 2017

Table 1: Reforms and reform proposals since 1911

Year		
1911	Parliament Act 1911	Following decades of controversy about the House of Lords' power, this measure ended its veto over Bills starting in the Commons, reducing it to a delay of roughly two years. It also specified a category of money bills over which House of Lords' powers would be minimal.
1918	Bryce Commission	A majority of the Commission recommended a chamber comprised of 246 members indirectly elected by regional groups of MPS, plus 81 members chosen by a joint standing committee. The proposals were debated but not implemented.
1949	Parliament Act 1949	The Act reduced the House of Lords' delaying power to roughly one year.
1958	Life Peerages Act 1958	This Act allowed people to be made peers for life, rather than on a hereditary basis. It also enabled women to join the Chamber for the first time.
1963	Peerage Act 1963	Allowed House of Lords members to surrender their hereditary peerages and allowed hereditary peeresses and all Scottish peers to sit and vote in the House.
1968	Parliament (No.2) Bill	Proposed large scale reform including reducing the delay power to six months and creating a two-tier House of voting and non-voting members. After long debate this Government Bill was dropped.
1999	House of Lords Act 1999	The first stage of a two-part reform programme, it removed all but 92 hereditary peers. At the same time the House of Lords Appointments Commission (HOLAC) was established, to advise on non-party peer appointments and vet proposed party nominees.
2000	Royal Commission on the Reform of the House of Lords	The second stage of the reform programme was considered by a Commission chaired by Lord Wakeham. It proposed a House of 550 members with 12–35% directly elected using proportional representation in regions. The majority of members would be appointed by a new appointments commission, who would manage party allocation based on recent general election results. The appointments commission would also ensure a balance in term of gender, ethnicity, age and region. 20% would be non-political appointees.
2001	White paper: Completing the Reform	This recommended a 600 member chamber with 20% elected and the rest appointed. The proposals were dropped.
2002	Joint Committee on House of Lords Reform	The Committee, chaired by Lord Cunningham, proposed seven options for reform from wholly elected to wholly appointed, and various combinations in between. In a series of free votes, all options were rejected by the Commons, while the House of Lords voted for an appointed chamber.

Year		
2003	White paper: Constitutional Reform, Next steps for the House of Lords	Proposed removing hereditary peers, capping the size of the House at 600 members appointed in line with recent general election results. The proposals were dropped.
2005	Constitutional Reform Act 2005	Established the Supreme Court removing the judicial function from the House of Lords and Parliament. resulted in establishment of an elected Lord Speaker to replace the Lord Chancellor as presiding officer of the House of Lords.
2007	Public Administration Select Committee Report: Propriety and Peerages	Recommended HOLAC being given greater powers over appointment, so the Prime Minister would no longer control the number and balance of appointments. Recommended removal of remaining 92 hereditary peers.
2009	Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill	This Government Bill initially included an end to by-elections for hereditary peers, disqualifying members guilty of serious crimes and allowing members to retire. But these measures were dropped.
2011	House of Lords Reform Bill	This Government Bill proposed an 80% or 100% elected chamber of 450 members. Bill was withdrawn after 91 Conservative MPs voted against it.
2013	Political and Constitutional Reform Committee report: House of Lords Reform, What Next?	Looked at small scale changes. Recommended reducing the size of the House, introducing voluntary retirement, expulsion of non-attendees and those who had committed serious offences, ending by-elections for hereditary peers, using a clear formula for sharing appointments between political parties.
2014	House of Lords Reform Act 2014	This Private Member's Bill allowed resignation from the House of Lords and allowed for expulsion of peers for non-attendance. Measures for ending by-elections for hereditary peers were dropped from the Bill.
2015	House of Lords (Expulsion and Suspension) Act 2015	This Private Member's Bill extended the grounds on which members could be expelled or suspended.
2015	Strathclyde Review	Government review of House of Lords' powers in relation to secondary legislation and Commons primacy on financial matters. Review's recommendations were not implemented.
2016	Motion in the name of Lord Cormack	House of Lords unanimously passed the motion "this House believes that its size should be reduced, and methods should be explored by which this could be achieved."

12. As table 1 demonstrates, the history of House of Lords reform has been a long and gradual one. Numerous proposals have been put forward, and most have failed. However, the combined effects of those reforms which have succeeded are significant. At the start of the 20th century the Prime Minister sat in the House of Lords and it was an all-male and almost exclusively hereditary chamber enjoying a veto power over all legislation. Today,

it is unthinkable that the Prime Minister would sit anywhere other than the House of Commons, and while the Lords remains unelected it is a far more representative House, both politically and in the types of people who have been made life peers. It has evolved into a revising chamber. Despite the failure of large-scale reforms, small-scale reforms have been fundamental.

13. For over 100 years, there has been only incremental reform of the House of Lords. Each step has been limited, usually responding to long held demands that have come to represent a consensus. This applies, for example, to the 1911 Parliament Act, the 1958 Life Peerages Act and the 1999 House of Lords Act; but taken together, they represent radical reform. In future the 2014 House of Lords Reform Act, which introduced the right for life peers to retire, may be seen in the same light. Meanwhile larger-scale reform proposals, such as those of the 1918 Bryce Commission, the 1968 Parliament (No. 2) Bill and the 2011 House of Lords Reform Bill, have often failed. Numerous others have never even reached a decision point in Parliament due to failure to reach agreement. The experience of the last century demonstrates that only incremental reform has succeeded. While never excluding the possibility of radical reform, when there is consensus on the next essential step, smaller incremental reforms are possible, and indeed necessary and important. In the end these can lead to radical change over a longer period.

2 The problem of the size of the House

14. Following the debate in the House of Lords on 5 December 2016, a motion was agreed in the name of Lord Cormack that the House of Lords “size should be reduced, and methods should be explored by which this could be achieved” and on 20 December 2016 the Lord Speaker announced the establishment of the Burns Committee.⁹

15. The creation of the Burns Committee reflected concern about the growth in the size of the House of Lords since 1999. As can be seen from table 2, the two longest serving Prime Ministers since 1999, Tony Blair and David Cameron who were in office for 14 out of the 19 years from 1997 to 2016, had appointment rates of 37.4 and 40.8 life peers per year respectively. In contrast, no Prime Minister before 1999 had an overall appointment rate above 25.

Table 2: Appointments since the creation of life peerages in 1957

Prime Minister	Period	Total number of Appointments	Appointments per year ¹⁰
Harold Macmillan	January 1957 - October 1963	47	7.8
Sir Alec Douglas-Home	October 1963 - October 1964	16	16
Harold Wilson	October 1963 - June 1970	135	19.2
Edward Heath	June 1970 - March 1974	45	11.25
Harold Wilson	March 1974 - April 1976	80	40 (23.8 over two terms)
James Callaghan	April 1976 - May 1979	58	19.3
Margret Thatcher	May 1979 - November 1990	201	20
John Major	May 1990 - May 1997	160	22.9
Tony Blair	May 1997 - June 2007	374	37.4
Gordon Brown	June 2007 - May 2010	34	11.3
David Cameron	May 2010 - July 2016	245	40.8
Theresa May	July 2016 - Present	40	20

Source: [Life Peerages Created Since 1958](#), House of Lords Library Briefing, 10 October 2018

16. Reports from committees, groups from both Houses of Parliament and external commentators have increasingly highlighted the issue of the size of the House of Lords.¹¹ For example, in 2011, the UCL Constitution Unit produced the report *House Full* signed by senior cross-party figures. This called for a complete moratorium on appointments to the House of Lords until cross-party agreement could be reached on a more regulated

9 HL Deb, 5 December 2016, [Col 500](#) [Lords Chamber]

10 Calculations made to closest full year, so should only be taken as indicative

11 Labour Peers' Working Group, [A Programme for Progress: The Future of the House of Lords and its Place in a Wider Constitution](#), (London: Labour Peers' Working Group, 2014); Ninth Report of Political and Constitutional Reform Committee of Session 2013–14, [House of Lords Reform: What Next?](#), HC251, 17 October 2013

system.¹² In particular it identified how the unregulated distribution of seats between parties is a significant factor in encouraging successive prime ministers to continually increase the chamber's size.

17. Our predecessor Committee's inquiry into *An Effective Second Chamber* heard evidence of widespread agreement about how it may be possible to reduce the size of the House, and that the need to agree an overall cap on numbers was the most immediate issue.¹³ Two former Lord Speakers made this clear: Baroness D'Souza said "what we are at the moment deeply concerned about is the size of the House" and Baroness Hayman agreed saying "the most immediate reform to me is to put a cap on the size of the House."¹⁴

18. One effect of growing size is that the House of Lords may find it more difficult to operate effectively. As Baroness D'Souza explained, "it interferes with the proper execution of our duties; it limits very often the time available for questions; it introduces a lot of time restraint, which means that the Government cannot often, or perhaps as well, be held to account".¹⁵ A final concern is the effect of the House of Lords' size on its cost, which is connected to its reputation, and consequently its effectiveness. Baroness D'Souza stated that "I think that the reason why it is so important is partly because of the perception, as I have repeatedly said, but also it is a huge burden on the taxpayer. The overall cost of peers' expenses is £20.1 million per year; the average expenses is about £26,000 per peer. If you reduced that by a quarter, you would save £5 million".¹⁶

The establishment of the Burns Committee

19. Following the Lord Speaker's announcement that he was establishing the Burns Committee, the Deputy Lord Speaker, Lord McFall set out that the remit of the Committee was to explore:

methods by which the size of the House can be reduced, commensurate with its current role and functions ... to examine practical and politically viable options that might lead to progress on this issue; analyse their implications; and set out any outstanding questions that may need to be answered in order for any proposals to command broad consensus across the House.¹⁷

20. This provided the Burns Committee with a clear task, or as Lord Burns described it, "an exam question", to look into a mechanism for reducing the size of the House of Lords.¹⁸ Lord Burns explained that his Committee's task was not to stray into the wider questions about reform, replacement or removal of the House of Lords. The Burns Committee was

12 Meg Russell, Lord Adonis, Graham Allen, Baroness Boothroyd, Lord Butler of Brockwell, Baroness Dean of Thornton-le-Fylde, Lord Dholakia, Baroness D'Souza, Lord Forsyth of Drumlean, Robert Hazell, Baroness Jay of Paddington, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, Lord Norton of Louth, Donald Shell, Lord Steel of Aikwood, Lord Stevenson of Coddanham, Baroness Williams of Crosby, Lord Woolf, Tony Wright., [House Full: Time to Get a Grip on Lords Appointments](#), (London: Constitution Unit, 2011).

13 Sixteenth Report of the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee of session 2016–2017, [The work of the Committee during the 2015–17 Parliament](#), HC 1151, 2 May 2017, para 23

14 Oral Evidence taken on 31 January 2017, HC (2016–17) 811, [Q2–3](#) [Baroness D'Souza, Baroness Hayman]

15 Oral Evidence taken on 31 January 2017, HC (2016–17) 811, [Q2](#) [Baroness D'Souza]

16 Oral Evidence taken on 31 January 2017, HC (2016–17) 811, [Q37](#) [Baroness D'Souza]

17 HL Debate, 20 December 2016, [HLWS 386](#) [Written Statement]

18 [Q6](#)

also “not trying to do anything with regard to the powers of the House of Lords”. Rather it sought to find an appropriate solution to the problem of size of the House for as long as it remains an appointed chamber.¹⁹

The problem of an ever-growing House

21. The “problem” the Burns Committee sought to address was not simply that the current size of the House of Lords was too big, but that there has been a long running tendency for the size of the House of Lords to increase.²⁰ In evidence to us, Lord Burns said the Committee had come to the view that this problem if not addressed would result in “an inexorable rise in the size of the House of Lords”.²¹

22. As the Burns Report sets out, the UK is unique among democratic countries in having a legislative chamber where members are appointed for life with no cap on size.²² Lord Burns explained to us that where incoming governments do not have a majority in the House, they seek to change the balance in their favour. The only way they can do this is by increasing the total size of the House. This has created what Lord Burns described as a “treadmill, whereby numbers keep increasing, and increasing quite substantially”.²³ The only exception to the increase in total size was the reduction that came about due to the exclusion of all but 92 hereditary peers through the House of Lords Act 1999. However, many of those who were removed were inactive peers, and as figure 1 demonstrates, while this one-time reduction decreased the overall size it did nothing to address the underlying factors that result in the trend for the Chamber’s size to continue to increase over time.



Source: [Report of the Lord Speaker’s Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017

19 [Q4](#)
 20 [Report of the Lord Speaker’s Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017, para 1–12
 21 [Q4](#)
 22 [Report of the Lord Speaker’s Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017, para 6
 23 [Q4](#)

23. The Burns Committee Report sets out that since 1997 appointments to the House of Lords averaged 35 per year, and the average life expectancy of new members was 25 years following the date of appointment. While the Report does not provide a time scale it suggests that at this rate of appointment and deaths, the number of life peers might “eventually settle at about 875” which together with 92 hereditary peers and 26 Bishops, would take the size of the House to nearly 1000.²⁴ However, the Report also warns that increasing life expectancy, together with the growing number of members needed for incoming prime ministers to rebalance party composition, could well push this number substantially higher.²⁵

24. There is widespread agreement that addressing the size of the Chamber is now an indispensable imperative, and that this has become the “unarguable next step” in the proven process of incremental Lords reform. There are serious concerns that the House of Lords’ growing size and cost has a direct impact on the Chamber’s ability to conduct its important functions. While more far reaching reforms should continue to be discussed, reaching agreement has always been difficult. Addressing the size of the House of Lords is an urgent political priority which must not be delayed.

24 [Report of the Lord Speaker’s Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017, para 10

25 [Report of the Lord Speaker’s Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017, para 10

3 The Burns Committee proposals

A House of Lords of 600 Members

25. One of the central recommendations of the Burns Report is that the size of the House of Lords should be reduced to 600 members and then capped at this number.²⁶ Lord Burns emphasised to us that the key aspect of this proposal is not the figure of 600 but rather the principle of capping the size of the House. He said that whether the cap is set at

500, 550, 600 or 650 is a second order question, because that number can be adjusted as we go along. The key is how to make the substantive change whereby people are no longer appointed for life and where the balance of appointments are made with some objective criteria in mind. That would mean, like in all legislative chambers that I am aware of, that there was a cap on the number.²⁷

26. The importance of imposing a cap is that it deals directly with the tendency for the House of Lords to continue to increase in size. Simply removing a number of peers in one go, or through practising a few years of restraint, would be unable to tackle this long term tendency.

27. The justification for setting the cap at 600, Lord Burns explained, was that it restricts the size of the House of Lords to no larger than the size of the House of Commons.²⁸ What the number should be, Lord Burns admitted, was a difficult question, because while the House of Lords was a full-time chamber, many members work part-time. This meant that working out the numbers needed to fill committees and carry legislative scrutiny was not a straightforward question.²⁹

28. The idea that the House of Lords should be the same size or smaller than the House of Commons was supported by the evidence to our predecessor Committee's inquiry. Baroness D'Souza said "it seems to me quite sensible, logical, to say that the revising chamber should not larger than the elected chamber".³⁰ Lord Judge went further saying:

The wide disproportion between the respective functions and powers and the membership of the two Houses of Parliament is self-evident. The House with significantly greater powers and responsibilities, answerable to the electorate, is smaller than the House with lesser powers which is not.³¹

29. The Burns Committee did not propose an immediate one time reduction to a House of Lords capped at 600. Instead it proposed a gradual reduction through implementing a "two-out, one-in" principle. This is because the Committee placed emphasis on continuing to refresh the membership of the House of Lords while reducing its overall size. Under this scheme a new appointment to the House of Lords could only be made once two existing

26 [Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017, para 16

27 [Q26](#)

28 [Q18](#)

29 [Q18](#)

30 Oral Evidence taken on 31 January 2017, HC (2016–17) 811, [Q38](#) [Baroness D'Souza]

31 Written evidence to HC (2016–17) 811, Lord Judge ([HOL002](#))

members have left, in effect allocating one departure to reducing the size of the House and the other to refreshing the membership. This principle would apply until the reduced number of 600 was reached.³²

30. This principle, the Burns Committee suggested, would provide an incentive for party groups to encourage current members to retire, as it would allow them to appoint new members to the House of Lords. However, there is also the question of ensuring party balance, and because of this the Report recommended that the party groups operate an “equal contribution’ basis, whereby each group would be required to persuade the same proportion of its 2017 membership, adjusted for the number of deaths, to retire each year”.³³ Targets for departures in the coming years were set out in the Report.

31. This “two-out, one-in” principle would require approximately 450 departures before a target size of 600 is reached. The Burns Report notes that the number of departures in the five years leading up to 2016 was 125 in total. Even under the Committee’s proposed enhanced rate of departures, it would take 11 years to reach 600.³⁴ When asked about the rate of reduction Lord Burns said that his first concern was not getting the size of the House down to 600 but reversing the increasing size of the House. A faster rate of retirement could hasten the reduction in the size of the House, but this would be difficult to achieve while maintaining a fair balance between parties. For example, imposing a fixed retirement age would have an uneven effect across the different party groups, which could cause difficulties. A faster reduction could also be achieved by stopping new appointments; however, this would mean the House would not be refreshed for several years.³⁵ Lord Burns said that it would be possible to look at methods for increasing the rate of reduction once the system was put in place, but that it was important to put the reduction in motion rather than creating a situation where “the best becomes the enemy of the good”.³⁶

32. The effect of implementing the Burns Report recommendations is the very minimum reform which should be contemplated. We support the objective of reducing the size of the House of Lords and capping the Chamber’s size at a maximum of 600 members, but we recommend that this be achieved more quickly than the rate set out in the Burns Report. We recognise that gaining consent for this reform depends upon avoiding unreasonable pressure on existing members to retire, but we urge the leaders of the party groups in the House of Lords to agree to strict retirement targets. We hope a faster rate of retirements is possible while maintaining the equal contribution basis outlined in the Burns report.

Formula for new appointments

33. New political appointments to the House of Lords should, the Burns Committee recommended, be allocated according to a formula based on the result of the previous general election. This recommendation echoes those made over a long period by many bodies, including our predecessors the Public Administration Select Committee (2007) and Political and Constitutional Reform Committee (2013), as indicated above in table 1. Two main methods for measuring the result of the previous general election were

32 Written evidence to HC (2016–17) 811, Lord Judge ([HOL002](#))

33 [Report of the Lord Speaker’s Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017, para 94

34 [Report of the Lord Speaker’s Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017, para 85

35 [Q27](#)

36 [Q28](#)

considered: seats in the House of Commons, or percentage share of the national vote. The first, the Burns Committee determined, would mean that the House of Lords would too closely reflect the House of Commons and the second would be too far removed from the reality of majority government. As a result, the Burns Committee recommended combining the national vote and the number of House of Commons seats won. This, it concluded, would mean the House of Lords would better reflect the changing political opinion across the country and, through the introduction of term limits, the political opinion expressed over the previous 15 years. This would provide “the stability desirable in a second chamber” while not challenging the “primacy of the Commons”.³⁷

34. The proposed formula would calculate the proportion of vacancies each party was due to receive in the years following a general election. Appointments would be made once a year in a single annual appointment round and the job of determining party allocations and maintaining membership lists would be carried out by the House of Lords Appointments Commission (HOLAC).³⁸

35. *It is important that the Prime Minister commits to the proposed cap and to limiting appointments in line with the proposed appointment formula. The adoption of this formula is a vital aspect of the proposals to reduce the size of the House. This system would make appointment of peers more transparent and set out clearly, as called for by our predecessor committees over many years, a constitutional convention that appointments to the House of Lords should reflect the results of the most recent general election.*

36. *In order to provide confidence in the Prime Minister's commitment to the proposed cap and limiting of appointments, this should also be set out in the Cabinet Manual.*

Oversight by HOLAC

37. The Burns Committee proposes that HOLAC would also be tasked with “ensuring that all nominees are aware, before they accept a peerage, of what being an active member of the House of Lords entails”.³⁹ This could be achieved without giving HOLAC additional powers, and is described in the Report as a “light touch approach” intended to add an extra aspect of scrutiny to those being considered for appointment.⁴⁰

38. In his pre-appointment hearing with this Committee, the new chair of HOLAC Lord Bew expressed his support for the idea that new members should be made aware of the importance of being a working peer and the commitment this entails.⁴¹ Lord Bew also said that while nominees “must have experience and expertise to bring to the work of the House, the House of Lords needs to look more like the country.”⁴² He emphasised the achievements of HOLAC in promoting diversity through its appointments but noted that HOLAC had no say on the diversity of appointments from political parties.⁴³

37 [Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017, para 57

38 [Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017, para 80–1

39 [Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017, para 82

40 [Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017, para 82

41 Oral Evidence taken on 6 September 2018, HC 1142, [Q10](#) [Lord Bew]

42 [Witten Evidence \[Lord Bew\]](#), HC 1142

43 Oral Evidence taken on 6 September 2018, HC 1142, [Q6](#) [Lord Bew]

39. We welcome the proposals in the Burns Report to strengthen the role of the House of Lords Appointments Commission (HOLAC) in ensuring nominees are made aware of what being active member of the House of Lords entails. *We recommend that all political parties and HOLAC provide a written statement of nomination setting out why a person is being nominated for a peerage and how this qualifies them to contribute to the House of Lords. The person nominated should also make a written statement prior to the nomination being approved, setting out how they intend to contribute to the work of the House of Lords, in particular to the scrutiny of Bills and other legislation, and in general to the work of the Committees of the House. This statement would be published when the peerage is announced.*

40. The current membership of the House of Lords, as Lord Bew pointed out to us, in many areas does not reflect the country which it serves. While changes have started to be put in place, it is important that new appointments better reflect the make-up of the UK, in areas such as gender, region, ethnicity and religion. *We recommend that HOLAC be given the role of monitoring and reporting on the diversity of nominees and peers for all groups. It should publish recommendations identifying which groups or communities require better representation, which should be aimed particularly at the political parties responsible for the majority of nominations.*

15-year fixed terms

41. The system that the Burns Committee recommended would ensure that the membership of a capped House of Lords would continue to be refreshed, this is underpinned by the proposal of a single non-renewable term of 15 years for new peers.⁴⁴ This fixed term would be achieved by requiring new members to sign an undertaking to only serve 15 years, and by making failure to adhere to this a breach of the House's code of conduct. Existing Members would not be required to sign up to a term limit. While the Committee recommended 15-year terms, they also considered 20-year terms and concluded that it was the introduction of a fixed term, rather than a particular length, that was important to the proposed reduction system.⁴⁵

42. Lord Burns explained that there was a clear feeling in the Burns Committee that one of the strengths of the House of Lords was the greater degree of independence of its members from party political influence compared to the House of Commons. While the Burns Committee had sympathy with the idea of renewable terms, the more they examined the idea the clearer it became that this would compromise the independence of party members, as it would effectively give power to the Whips over who would be reappointed.⁴⁶

43. **The introduction of 15-year term limits for new life peers is perhaps the most radical element of the scheme and it will immediately create two classes of peer with all existing peers remaining appointed for life, and all new peers for a fixed term. There are members of both Houses who have been highly effective parliamentarians for far longer than 15 years, and this fixed term could remove peers at the peak of their effectiveness. However, the questions that some might raise about 15-year term limits should not become an impediment to the adoption of the rest of the Burns Report**

44 [Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017, para 29,35

45 [Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017, para 39

46 [Qq35-41](#)

proposals. In particular, the formula determining appointments and the cap on the size of the House can be implemented without adopting term limits. A fixed term limit is desirable but not essential and should continue to be kept under consideration.

Other principles of appointment

44. The only exception to appointments being made once a year, under the Burns Report proposals, would be for the appointment of a person to the House of Lords to become a Minister. Such a person could be appointed at any time and would come out of that party's allocation at the next round of appointments.⁴⁷

45. The Burns Committee proposed that Crossbench membership of the House should maintain its current proportion, which would give Crossbenchers 134 out of 600 members. These members should continue to be appointed predominantly on the recommendation of HOLAC. The two exceptions to this would be the 10 Prime Ministerial Crossbench appointments and appointments of Supreme Court Justices. Currently the Prime Minister by convention does not appoint more than 10 Crossbench peers in each Parliament. To account for the potential of early elections, the Burns Committee recommended this convention be adjusted to 10 appointments every five years rather than every Parliament.⁴⁸

46. The Burns Committee also recommended that Supreme Court Justices be given a peerage upon appointment to the Court, to ensure that legal expertise is maintained in the House, but that they would not take their place in the House until they retired from the court.⁴⁹ The Burns Committee recommended, however, that these Justices commit to serve a shorter term of seven years to ensure proportionate representation as part of the Crossbench membership of the House.⁵⁰

Hereditary Peers and Lords Spiritual

47. As the system proposed by the Burns Committee is designed to be implemented without legislation, there are two groups that cannot be reduced and therefore need to be taken into account within the proposed system. The existence of the 26 Lords Spiritual in the House of Lords is set out in statute. For this number to be changed would require legislation, and so the Burns Committee's proposal was to reduce the number of appointed (and hereditary) members of the House to 574.

48. Under the House of Lords Act 1999, all but two of the remaining 92 hereditary peers must be replaced through by-elections when they retire or die. The Report recommended that hereditary peers also be asked to undertake to sit for no more than 15 years, which would keep the terms of hereditary peers in line with directly appointed colleagues. However, these vacancies must, "in some cases by law, in others by convention", be filled by a person from the same group as the original 1999 peer.⁵¹ As these appointments are mandated by statute, in order to remain in line with the proportions set out in the Burns formula, these peers would have the first call on any party (or Crossbench) group's annual appointment round. Given that the hereditary peers are disproportionately from

47 [Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017, para 56

48 [Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017, para 74

49 [Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017, para 75–6

50 [Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017, para 77

51 [Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017, para 78

the Conservative (51) or Crossbench (30) groups, the continued presence of the hereditary peers would limit in particular the spaces for other appointments within these groups, as noted in the Report.

49. Lord Burns told us that because his Committee's proposals were intended to be implemented without legislation, it had to leave to one side the issues of bishops and hereditary peers. He said he thought it was quite important not to get involved with issues like these, which were "extremely difficult and would simply lead to the postponement of any plans".⁵²

50. The issue of the hereditary peers and the Lords Spiritual highlights the fact that the proposals of the Burns Committee cannot be regarded as anything other than a temporary expedient pending primary legislation on Lords reform. When the cap of 600 peers has been achieved, almost 20 percent of the Upper House will comprise of bishops and hereditary peers. Such a House will not be representative of the diversity of the modern United Kingdom.

4 Developments since the publication of the Burns Report

The Prime Minister's response to Burns

51. As the Burns Committee's report is explicitly designed to be implemented without requiring legislation, new peers would continue to be appointed by the Queen on the advice of the Prime Minister. The whole system proposed by the Burns Committee is, therefore, dependent on current and future Prime Ministers voluntarily adhering to the appointment limits and proportions outlined in its Report.⁵³

52. The Prime Minister wrote to the Lord Speaker in response to the Report on 20 February 2018. She described the Burns Report as "thorough and careful" and "a serious attempt to take the challenge presented to them".⁵⁴ She set out that, after making a small number of "legacy" appointments arising from the previous general election, her intention was to act with restraint when making "further appointments over the remainder of this Parliament".⁵⁵ She however emphasised that any restraint on her part would only have a limited effect on reducing the size of the House, unless House members themselves were willing to retire. Equally, however, her letter acknowledged that during the debate on the Burns Report in the House of Lords in December 2017, "a number of speakers made clear that, without an assurance of restraint by the Prime Minister, they would be reluctant to take advantage of their ability to retire".⁵⁶

53. The Prime Minister identified two separate types of recommendations in the Burns Report: those "which are necessary to achieve the reduction in the size of the House of Lords"; and those which would "establish mechanisms by which the House would thereafter be maintained."⁵⁷ The Prime Minister expressed caution about the constitutional issues associated with the second set of recommendations, which she suggested would have "a significant impact on the composition and, therefore, the character and functions of the House of Lords".⁵⁸ These issues, she suggested, would "require careful thought and wider engagement, particularly with the House of Commons".⁵⁹ In this category she particularly identified the proposals for fixed 15-year terms.

54. **We welcome the Prime Minister's letter to the Lord Speaker and her commitment to show restraint in making appointments for the rest of the Parliament. However, in order to ensure progress, it is essential that this commitment is made more concrete. As such we urge the Prime Minister to commit to the principle of two-out, one-in, as proposed by the Burns Committee, and to the future appointment formula based on general election results.**

53 [Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House](#), 31 October 2017, para 53

54 [Prime Minister correspondence with Rt. Hon. Lord Fowler](#), 20 February 2018

55 [Prime Minister correspondence with Rt. Hon. Lord Fowler](#), 20 February 2018

56 [Prime Minister correspondence with Rt. Hon. Lord Fowler](#), 20 February 2018

57 [Prime Minister correspondence with Rt. Hon. Lord Fowler](#), 20 February 2018

58 [Prime Minister correspondence with Rt. Hon. Lord Fowler](#), 20 February 2018

59 [Prime Minister correspondence with Rt. Hon. Lord Fowler](#), 20 February 2018

The Second Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House

55. A year after its initial Report, the Burns Committee published a second report on 24 October 2018, commenting on the Prime Minister's letter, and setting out the departures and appointments since the General Election in June 2017.⁶⁰ The Burns Committee welcomed the Prime Minister's suggestion that, following a period of restraint, arrangements could be formalised, and it re-emphasised the importance of capping the membership of the House of Lords.⁶¹ It accepted that the introduction of fixed terms for peerages was a constitutionally significant measure, but re-emphasised the "robust advice" that it had received from leading experts that these proposals were "constitutionally and legally sound".⁶²

56. The Burns Committee noted that in the year since the general election, departures had exceeded those estimated in its first Report—representing 36 departures, compared to the annual proposed benchmark of 31. However, proposed appointments had also overall been exceeded, reaching 25 in the period since the general election. Nonetheless, the Burns Committee accepted the Prime Minister's description of the 13 appointments that she made on 18 May 2018 as a "legacy issue", and conceded that these should not be included in the overall calculations.⁶³ When this factor is taken into account, the figures fall within the numbers set out in the Burns Report as shown in table 3 below.

Table 3: Departures and Appointments for House of Lords Year 1 after 2017 General Election

Group	Expected Departures Year 1	Actual Departures Year 1	Expected Appointments Year 1	Actual Appointments Year 1	Adjusted Appointments Year 1
Con	10	11	5.2	12	3
Lab	8	13	4.6	3	0
LD	4	1	0.6	0	0
XB	7	10	3.4	9	9
Other	2	1	1.2	1	0
Total	31	36	15	25	12

Source: [Second Report of the Lord Speakers Committee on Size of the House](#), 24 October 2018

57. We are encouraged by the overall figures for year 1 in the Second Report of the Burns Committee. These figures do seem to support our recommendation above that the rate of reduction could be increased through cooperation of the party groups.

60 [Second Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House](#), 24 October 2018

61 [Second Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House](#), 24 October 2018, para 10

62 [Second Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House](#), 24 October 2018, para 11

63 [Second Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House](#), 24 October 2018, para 21

Conclusion

58. We welcome the initiative of Lord Fowler to set up the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House, and the hard work and care taken by the Committee to produce its Report reflecting a consensus and its follow up Second Report. We are pleased that the Report has been widely welcomed in the House of Lords itself, and that peers are showing willingness to act. The Report has produced an achievable system for reducing the size of the House of Lords without need for legislation. The early indications from the Burns Committee's Second Report are that, with commitment from all parties, this reform can succeed.

59. *The broad scheme of the Burns report presents an opportunity which must not be missed. This is a minimal incremental reform, which will fall far short of the aspirations of many who wish to see abolition or an elected Upper House; but the House of Lords itself should take the opportunity to make this reform, given that it does not require legislation. Adopting this reform does, however, not remove the pressure for more fundamental reform of the second chamber.*

60. *While we recommend the non-legislative proposals set out in the Burns Report as an achievable next step for addressing the problem of the size of the House, the task of reforming the second chamber of the UK Parliament must not be put on hold until the issue of the size of the House of Lords is "solved". This small incremental reform should not halt the pursuit of more radical reform to the second chamber, 107 years after the Parliament Act 1911 was passed only as a temporary expedient.*

Conclusions and recommendations

History of Reform of the House of Lords

1. For over 100 years, there has been only incremental reform of the House of Lords. Each step has been limited, usually responding to long held demands that have come to represent a consensus. This applies, for example, to the 1911 Parliament Act, the 1958 Life Peerages Act and the 1999 House of Lords Act; but taken together, they represent radical reform. In future the 2014 House of Lords Reform Act, which introduced the right for life peers to retire, may be seen in the same light. Meanwhile larger-scale reform proposals, such as those of the 1918 Bryce Commission, the 1968 Parliament (No. 2) Bill and the 2011 House of Lords Reform Bill, have often failed. Numerous others have never even reached a decision point in Parliament due to failure to reach agreement. The experience of the last century demonstrates that only incremental reform has succeeded. While never excluding the possibility of radical reform, when there is consensus on the next essential step, smaller incremental reforms are possible, and indeed necessary and important. In the end these can lead to radical change over a longer period. (Paragraph 13)

The problem of an ever-growing House

2. There is widespread agreement that addressing the size of the Chamber is now an indispensable imperative, and that this has become the “unarguable next step” in the proven process of incremental Lords reform. There are serious concerns that the House of Lords’ growing size and cost has a direct impact on the Chamber’s ability to conduct its important functions. While more far reaching reforms should continue to be discussed, reaching agreement has always been difficult. Addressing the size of the House of Lords is an urgent political priority which must not be delayed. (Paragraph 24)

A House of Lords of 600 Members

3. *The effect of implementing the Burns Report recommendations is the very minimum reform which should be contemplated. We support the objective of reducing the size of the House of Lords and capping the Chamber’s size at a maximum of 600 members, but we recommend that this be achieved more quickly than the rate set out in the Burns Report. We recognise that gaining consent for this reform depends upon avoiding unreasonable pressure on existing members to retire, but we urge the leaders of the party groups in the House of Lords to agree to strict retirement targets. We hope a faster rate of retirements is possible while maintaining the equal contribution basis outlined in the Burns report.* (Paragraph 32)

Formula for new appointments

4. *It is important that the Prime Minister commits to the proposed cap and to limiting appointments in line with the proposed appointment formula. The adoption of this formula is a vital aspect of the proposals to reduce the size of the House. This system would make appointment of peers more transparent and set out clearly,*

as called for by our predecessor committees over many years, a constitutional convention that appointments to the House of Lords should reflect the results of the most recent general election. (Paragraph 35)

5. *In order to provide confidence in the Prime Minister's commitment to the proposed cap and limiting of appointments, this should also be set out in the Cabinet Manual.* (Paragraph 36)

Oversight by HOLAC

6. We welcome the proposals in the Burns Report to strengthen the role of the House of Lords Appointments Commission (HOLAC) in ensuring nominees are made aware of what being active member of the House of Lords entails. *We recommend that all political parties and HOLAC provide a written statement of nomination setting out why a person is being nominated for a peerage and how this qualifies them to contribute to the House of Lords. The person nominated should also make a written statement prior to the nomination being approved, setting out how they intend to contribute to the work of the House of Lords, in particular to the scrutiny of Bills and other legislation, and in general to the work of the Committees of the House. This statement would be published when the peerage is announced.* (Paragraph 39)
7. The current membership of the House of Lords, as Lord Bew pointed out to us, in many areas does not reflect the country which it serves. While changes have started to be put in place, it is important that new appointments better reflect the make-up of the UK, in areas such as gender, region, ethnicity and religion. *We recommend that HOLAC be given the role of monitoring and reporting on the diversity of nominees and peers for all groups. It should publish recommendations identifying which groups or communities require better representation, which should be aimed particularly at the political parties responsible for the majority of nominations.* (Paragraph 40)

15 year fixed terms

8. The introduction of 15-year term limits for new life peers is perhaps the most radical element of the scheme and it will immediately create two classes of peer with all existing peers remaining appointed for life, and all new peers for a fixed term. There are members of both Houses who have been highly effective parliamentarians for far longer than 15 years, and this fixed term could remove peers at the peak of their effectiveness. However, the questions that some might raise about 15-year term limits should not become an impediment to the adoption of the rest of the Burns Report proposals. In particular, the formula determining appointments and the cap on the size of the House can be implemented without adopting term limits. A fixed term limit is desirable but not essential and should continue to be kept under consideration. (Paragraph 43)

The Prime Minister's response to Burns

9. We welcome the Prime Minister's letter to the Lord Speaker and her commitment to show restraint in making appointments for the rest of the Parliament. However, in order to ensure progress, it is essential that this commitment is made more concrete. As such we urge the Prime Minister to commit to the principle of two-out, one-in, as proposed by the Burns Committee, and to the future appointment formula based on general election results. (Paragraph 54)

The Second Report of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House

10. We are encouraged by the overall figures for year 1 in the Second Report of the Burns Committee. These figures do seem to support our recommendation above that the rate of reduction could be increased through cooperation of the party groups. (Paragraph 57)
11. We welcome the initiative of Lord Fowler to set up the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House, and the hard work and care taken by the Committee to produce its Report reflecting a consensus and its follow up Second Report. We are pleased that the Report has been widely welcomed in the House of Lords itself, and that peers are showing willingness to act. The Report has produced an achievable system for reducing the size of the House of Lords without need for legislation. The early indications from the Burns Committee's Second Report are that, with commitment from all parties, this reform can succeed. (Paragraph 58)
12. The broad scheme of the Burns report presents an opportunity which must not be missed. This is a minimal incremental reform, which will fall far short of the aspirations of many who wish to see abolition or an elected Upper House; but the House of Lords itself should take the opportunity to make this reform, given that it does not require legislation. Adopting this reform does, however, not remove the pressure for more fundamental reform of the second chamber. (Paragraph 59)
13. While we recommend the non-legislative proposals set out in the Burns Report as an achievable next step for addressing the problem of the size of the House, the task of reforming the second chamber of the UK Parliament must not be put on hold until the issue of the size of the House of Lords is "solved". This small incremental reform should not halt the pursuit of more radical reform to the second chamber, 107 years after the Parliament Act 1911 was passed only as a temporary expedient. (Paragraph 60)

Formal minutes

Tuesday 06 November 2018

Members Present

Sir Bernard Jenkin, in the Chair

Dame Cheryl Gillan	Dr Rupa Huq
Kelvin Hopkins	Mr David Jones

Draft Report (*A smaller House of Lords: the report of the Lord Speaker's committee on the size of the House*) proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 60 agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Thirteenth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available (Standing Order No. 134).

[Adjourned till 19 November 12.00 pm

Witness

The following witness gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Tuesday 30 January 2018

Lord Burns, Chair, The Lord Speaker's Committee on the Size of the House

[Q1-105](#)

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2017–19

First Report	Devolution and Exiting the EU and Clause 11 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill: Issues for Consideration	HC 484
Second Report	Parliamentary Boundary Reviews: What Next?	HC 559 (HC 1072)
Third Report	PHSO Annual Scrutiny 2016–17	HC 492 (HC 1479)
Fourth Report	Ensuring Proper Process for Key Government Decisions: Lessons Still to be Learned from the Chilcot Report	HC 854 (HC 1555)
Fifth Report	The Minister and the Official: The Fulcrum of Whitehall Effectiveness	HC 497
Sixth Report	Accounting for Democracy Revisited: The Government Response and Proposed Review	HC 1197
Seventh Report	After Carillion: Public sector outsourcing and contracting	HC 748
Eighth Report	Devolution and Exiting the EU: reconciling differences and building strong relationships	HC 1485 (HC 1574)
Ninth Report	Appointment of Lord Bew as Chair of the House of Lords Appointments Commission	HC 1142
Tenth Report	Pre-Appointment Hearings: Promoting Best Practice	HC 909
Eleventh Report	Appointment of Mr Harry Rich as Registrar of Consultant Lobbyists	HC 1249
Twelfth Report	Appointment of Lord Evans of Weardale as Chair of the Committee on Standards in Public Life	HC 930
First Special Report	Will the NHS never learn? Follow-up to PHSO report 'Learning from Mistakes' on the NHS in England: Government Response to the Committee's Seventh Report of Session 2016–17	HC 441
Second Special Report	The Future of the Union, part two: Inter-institutional relations in the UK: Government Response to the Sixth Report from the Committee, Session 2016–17	HC 442
Third Special Report	Lessons still to be learned from the Chilcot inquiry: Government Response to the Committee's Tenth Report of Session 2016–17	HC 708
Fourth Special Report	Government Response to the Committee's Thirteenth Report of Session 2016–7: Managing Ministers' and officials' conflicts of interest: time for clearer values, principles and action	HC 731

Fifth Special Report	Parliamentary Boundary Reviews: What Next?: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 1072
Sixth Special Report	PHSO Annual Scrutiny 2016–17: Government and PHSO Response to the Committee's Third Report	HC 1479
Seventh Special Report	Ensuring Proper Process for Key Government Decisions: Lessons Still to be Learned from the Chilcot Report: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report	HC 1555
Eighth Special Report	Government Response to the Committee's Eighth Report: Devolution and Exiting the EU: reconciling differences and building strong relationships	HC 1574